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NORMAN YATES: TOWARD LANDSPACE

A STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIS LANDSCAPE PAINTINGS

by

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A THESIS
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Date September 1, 1981

FOR RICK AND JOHN

ABSTRACT

This thesis documents the work of Alberta landscape painter, Norman Yates. He is a mature artist with an established approach to his work, especially that body of work completed between 1975 and 1980, the Land Drawings and the Landspace Paintings. This study presents and analyzes pertinent biographical data as well as discussing the formal structure and thematic content of carefully selected, important drawings and paintings from the artist's oeuvre. In this way, the thesis traces Yates' artistic development from boyhood to maturity.

In the discussion of the paintings, the thesis presents the artistic concepts that have formed Yates' work from his student years at the Ontario College of Art through his professional career. Particular attention is payed to the developed of Yates' artistic tenets which concern the spacial aspects of a work of art. Finally, this discussion explains the development of the artist's concepts related to landscape painting which are based on his personal perceptions of the space of the prairie landscape.

PREFACE

This thesis will document the work of Alberta landscape painter, Norman Yates. He is a mature artist with an established approach to his work, especially that body of work completed between 1975 and 1980, the Land Drawings and the Landspace Paintings. This study will present and analyze pertinent biographical data as well as discuss the formal structure and thematic content of carefully selected, important drawings and paintings from the artist's oeuvre. In this way, the thesis will trace Yates' artistic development from boyhood to maturity.

In the discussion of the paintings, the thesis will present the artistic concepts that have formed Yates' work from his student years at the Ontario College of Art through his professional career. Particular attention will be payed to the development of Yates' artistic tenets which concern the spacial aspects of a work of art. Finally, this discussion will explain the development of the artist's concepts related to landscape painting.

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Chapter I

THE EARLY YEARS

1923 - 1946

The Yates family came to Canada from England shortly after World War I, settling near Calgary because they had relatives in that city. After a few unsatisfactory years as farmers, the family moved into Calgary where Albert M. Yates resumed his original trade as a tailor. Shortly after their son, Edward Norman, was born on September 7, 1923, the family moved to Regina, arriving there some time in 1924. That Prairie city became the family's permanent home and the background for Yates' earliest memories.

Norman exhibited his love of drawing as a young child and received encouragement to pursue this hobby at home. His favorite childhood present was a large newsprint scribbler and crayons or pencils which he never grew tired of receiving. His grandfather, a carpenter, also liked to draw and would produce pictures on demand as they were requested by young Norman. Unfortunately, there was little art taught in either elementary or secondary school at the time and although, according to the artist in hindsight, "there was some encouragement, there was often discouragement through misunderstanding."[1] As is often the case, it seems to be the discouraging experiences that Yates remembers most clearly from his Herchmer Public School art classes. At the same time, there was no opportunity for him to see art in the Regina of his youth, other than as reproductions or illustrations in school textbooks. In fact, he does not remember

seeing an original painting as a boy. However, he enjoyed drawing immensely, and carried on the activity at home without the benefit of instruction. Later, while attending Scott Collegiate Institute, he drew cartoons for the school newspaper. With these often satirical drawings, he received the first public recognition of his talent. The artist remembers this experience as an encouragement that he "could actually use his drawing ability to some advantage."[2] However, although the Yates family encouraged his interest in art as a hobby, it was never considered to be useful training for a future career, especially not for a boy growing up in Saskatchewan in the 1930's.

On the other hand, the most positive and powerful influence on Norman's future development as a painter, the western Prairie, was freely available within a short walk of the Yates family home on the edge of Regina. As Norman was growing up during the barren depression years, he might naturally have perceived the physical world as a powerful, often cruel force, against which mere humans were helpless.[3] In spite of the dried out land and drifting soil, however, he developed a love for the varied beauty of the land and the sky.

Another strong impression which became an influence on his art was being formed. This was his concern for his fellow men, an understandable outcome of growing up in Saskatchewan during the development of its democratic socialism in the 1930's.[4] Yates believes that "those who were born in the great space of the West formulated a spirit of community as a matter of physical survival and social need."[5] Reflecting this sentiment is the image of a specific childhood incident which stands out vividly in the artist's memory.

As a twelve year old child, he witnessed the Regina Riot of 1935:

> By accident, we drove right into the middle of a confrontation. It was July 1. I remember it as a very exciting day; one that had real power and a tremendous imprint.[6]

Upon finishing high school in 1941, Yates joined the R.C.A.F. After taking an aptitude test that indicated a natural ability in electronics, he was sent to McGill University to begin training as a radar technician. Living in Montreal and attending university was a "rapidly, broadening experience."[7] Along with many other new encounters, it was in Montreal that he saw original paintings for the first time.

In November of 1942, Yates was sent to England where he remained until the end of World War II. On his occasional airplane flights, the view of the world from the air reminded him of his experiences on the Prairie as a boy:

> I was aware almost constantly of a feeling of claustrophobia in eastern Canada and England. The view outside the airplane always released me. I liked to get up and above the world, especially in England. . . ., so I could get the same view as I did on the Prairies. The spacial effect of the Prairies is the closest one can get to a limitless sense of space. . . It was a psychological release to fly.[8]

While in England, Yates briefly visited a few art colleges and joined some "life" drawing classes that were arranged for Air Force personnel at a nearby art school These experiences convinced him to become a painter on his return to Canada. However, growing up during an economic depression and coming out of a war, one needed a great deal of determination to chose painting as a career. He remembers

making this important decision against the advice of everyone but his wife, Whynona, whom he had married in England during the war.

After the war, Yates took another aptitude test to qualify for Department of Veterans Affairs rehabilitation financing. The result of the test showed that he should become a commercial artist (there was no fine art category). When Yates returned to Canada, he examined possible art schools and finally chose to attend the Ontario College of Art, generally considered to be the best art school in Canada at the time.[9] Along with the obvious disadvantage of being involved in a war for four years came one great advantage - the experience had given Yates the maturity to know what he wanted and to stand by his convictions. So after completing the first basic year of his commerical art program, he switched to fine arts, choosing painting as a "major" and graphics as a "minor".

Chapter II

TORONTO AND EUROPE

1947 - 1953

The interruption of normal life caused by World War II understandably affected the Toronto art scene. However, even before the war, art in Toronto tended to be quite conservative, as opposed to the more international art scene associated with John Lyman in Montreal. Artistic activity in Toronto centered around the continuation of the Group of Seven known as the Canadian Group of Painters, the Ontario Society of Artists, and the old established Royal Canadian Academy while it was the members of these groups who exhibited regularly.[1] However, after the war, with many young artists and art students returning home, the art scene in Toronto began to become increasingly more vigorous and exciting. It was during this particular period from 1947 to 1951, that Yates attended the Ontario College of Art in Toronto.

During this time, the acceptable approach to painting at O.C.A., advocated by most of the instructors, was to apply paint in the broad manner of the Group of Seven.[2] In spite of this stylistic approach, the popular subject matter was the urban scene rather than the northern Ontario landscape so favored by the Group of Seven. Paul Duval attempts to give a reason for this change in subject matter:

> The depression of the '30s fell with a bitter reality upon a full generation of Canadians. It bore fruit in art, however, in that the immediacy of the economic situation drew the attention of Canadian artists to the contemporary

> human drama. The day-to-day life of the ordinary man on the street captured the attention of draughtsmen Louis Muhlstock and John Alfsen. The graphic portrayals of humanity by these two artists encouraged an increasing number to focus their attention on the activities of their fellow citizens.[3]

Several of Yates' instructors had been war artists.[4] Their experiences in Europe could also have increased their need to direct their artistic expression toward an examination of the "activities of their fellow citizens." It should be noted further that four of Yates' instructors had studied at the Art Students' League in New York where they might have been influenced by the American Scene painters who were known to prefer urban subjects.[5] For a variety of reasons, then, the three instructors that Yates feels had the greatest influence on his student work, John Alfsen, Harley Parker and Fred Hagen, all produced fairly realistic portrayals of everyday life and people combined with some distortion for expressive purposes.

Yates admired Harley Parker and enjoyed having conversations on artistic and aesthetic matters with this "most dynamic and interesting person."[6] Most importantly, Yates took a course from Parker in which Joseph Albers' color theory was introduced. This course stimulated the young painter's interest in color as an important visual force. According to Albers, color is the most relative medium in art because "in visual perception a color is almost never seen as it really is - as it physically is."[7] Yates remembers Albers' theories as a "revelation" to himself and his classmates who had not previously treated color as such an important aspect of painting. Albers further believed that his color theory could only be understood by each student discovering for himself on a "trial and error" basis, the

obvious as well as the subtle relationships between colors. Yates must have enjoyed this approach to learning as the importance of "process" continues to be integral to his belief that he does not feel he really understands a theory until he has actually applied it to his own work and observed the result for himself. Also, the stress placed by Albers on the dynamic nature of color appealed to Norman Yates who uses the word "dynamic" often in his conversation. Even today, he is intrigued by the dynamic, ever changing quality of life, explaining that he sees the world as "a series of relationships with differences and that dualities may occur and there may be opposites occurring but they're always dynamic."[8]

Yates attended drawing classes given by Will Ogilvy and John Alfsen, who shared a belief in the importance of fine draughtsmanship as well as the importance of the actual mark on the paper, unsubordinated to description. This belief became one of Yates' basic artistic tenets. He remembers Alfsen's sensitive drawings, particularly, as being characterized by a "sensual use of material," while the marks made by the soft pencil were "full of the joy of life."[9]

> I got from him a sort of élan, flamboyance, flair, putting down the touch here and there. . . . I remember wanting to develop that directness of touch that was more than just observational skills, more than just a knowledge in your head of what the structure was. It somehow magically came down as something quite different on the paper that was very personal, and I found that to be a fascinating possibility for drawing.[10]

Since his days at the Ontario College of Art, Yates has believed that the touch on the paper is the "prime force in a drawing. . . and gives it its personality and quality."[11]

Another instructor at O.C.A., Eric Friefield, was also a flamboyant drawing teacher. Tacking huge sheets of white paper to the wall, and attaching a piece of black charcoal to the end of a long stick, he would make "bold, rather sensitive drawings with a directness of touch" to the delight of his large class of students.[12] The power of scale and scale relationships, which is of special interest to Yates, was perhaps first drawn to his attention by Friefield's "performances".

In contrast to Friefield, a "quiet excitement and intensity of belief" characterized Jock MacDonald's personality.[13] Yates did not realize it at the time, but he received the beginnings of an admiration for spontaneous, non-objective art from MacDonald:

> Later out in the middle of a field, with a spacial notion, unable to do anything but be non-objective, because I was walking all around the canvas, I'd suddenly remember Jock MadDonald.[14]

Another instructor was G. Röling, a visiting artist from Holland, who taught at O.C.A. during Yates' final year of study. Röling exhibited a "disciplined approach to painting," and believed that emotional forces, while important, had to be "controlled into a manifestation of the surface."[15] He also impressed Yates with a painterly approach to color, as opposed to Parker's psychological or perceptual approach. As a result, Röling instilled in the younger painter, the importance of the purity of transparent glazes that would remain an integral part of his work.

At O.C.A., the students were often asked to choose an area of Toronto and attempt to produce an objective rendition of the scene as

it occurred to their perceptions. Yates usually chose to paint in the harbor area or Cabbagetown where he enjoyed the colors, movement, and excitement of the people and their surroundings. After choosing a scene to paint, the students were expected to compose the pictorial elements or objects of the scene so that an illusion of depth was created as if the scene was being viewed through a window. Although the elements were to be disposed on the canvas in order to suggest movements of force, the abstract relationships were always to be related back to the naturally oriented space since the objective reality was all important. A typical exercise was totally object oriented with no discussion of concepts like "negative space". In spite of this training, Yates' mature work is largely concerned with an exploration of the dynamics of pictorial space, a study that he undertook on his own while he matured as an artist. A typical student assignment carried out by Yates around 1950 can be seen in an untitled water color painting of a wrecked boat (Plate 1).

The major compositional structure of the painting consists of a predominant horizontal and contrasting vertical movement with several secondary geometric compositional elements such as diagonals, angles, and contrasting curves. Carl Schaefer, the teacher in this case, "stressed line, the relationship between vertical and horizontal, [and] the geometric shapes to which all forms can be reduced."[16] Here, Yates abandons local color in his use of subdued reds and blues which enhance and unify the composition and also illustrate his awareness of Albers' color theory. Both the compositional elements and the colors chosen for this student peice, remain the artist's favorites for many years. In this untitled water color, Yates renders the

actual scene in an objective manner, while the imagination is involved in distorting the scene for compositional reasons.

Yates' peer group at O.C.A. consisted of mature students who had a serious sense of purpose about their art. In spite of this attitude, they found it difficult to exhibit their work in Toronto of the 1940's. In response to what they felt an elitist system of institutional or high commercial galleries, they formed a radical, anti-establishment group that they satirically called The Cadillac Club. With youthful idealism, they talked of changing art and society, and of creating works of art that would relate to everybody. They hoped to bring art away from the elitist areas of the city, back to the common people. This idea of making art relate to the people gained strength during Yates' last two years of college and became the direction of his future artistic expression. During his O.C.A. years, he expressed this theme in a rather romantically semi-impressionistic style depicting working class people in their environment.

While a student, Yates worked as the monitor of the print-making studio, and as payment, received extra time to work with the equipment. Fred Hagen, a well-known instructor at O.C.A., introduced Yates to print making and stage design as artistic forms. With Hagen, Yates enjoyed discussing the "responsibilities of being an artist and his moral relationship to society."[17] Most importantly, Hagen, along with Harley Parker, instilled in Yates "a sense of confidence in his attempt to become an artist."[18]

The Gate (c.1950) (Plate 2), was made in conjunction with a class taught by Hagen. He encouraged the students to become psychologically involved with an idea and to use formal relationships and

distortions to express their idea dramatically. The Gate reflects Yates' attempt at a comment on the urban scene. Here, prominent horizontal and vertical lines predominate while an arc formed by a street light illuminates two derelicts. The use of contrasting white and black adds drama to the work and also reinforces the symbolic content of the scene.

The broken, spikey gate separates the observer's world from that of the derelicts, and heightens the contrast between us and the two wretched men. Yates remembers often watching derelicts rest in the park across from the college. Here, however, the artist, like the observer, is in the pleasant surroundings of the park, close to nature, while the derelicts are located in the rather oppressive urban scene. The gate between the two areas is obviously important since it gives title to the work. A gate or passageway from one space to another physically or psychologically, always remains an important concept for Yates in his work. Another continuing thread in Yates' artistic development is the careful manipulation of the viewer, as is already seen in The Gate, because here, the viewer, with the artist, apparently stands in the park separated from the derelicts in their space. In summary, we see that Yates' student works, like The Gate and the previously discussed water color painting of the old boat, are expressive figurative renditions reflecting the urban scene.

While Yates became an accomplishing print-maker, he did not like "the 'distance' between the artist and the finished work."[19] He preferred drawing and painting in which there is the direct human touch on the work.

* * *

After graduating from O.C.A. with First Class Honors, Yates wanted to develop his career as a professional artist. This was difficult because the Cadillac Club had dispersed, school studio space was no longer available, and the Department of Veterans Affairs financial support ended. So, for "lack of a better plan," Yates travelled to England where he worked as a bookkeeper for about six months.[20] In the weeks before leaving England, he attended the Festival of Britain of 1951, where he was especially impressed by the dynamic spacial explorations suggested by the architectural exhibits.

Leaving England in 1951, Yates toured by bicycle in northern Europe for about three months. The greatest excitement of the trip was his personal discovery of the European way of life, as his mode of travel brought him into close contact with people. Yates felt that the experience of meeting "the people" helped him to understand European art in a more complete way. He was impressed with the way in which van Gogh's and Daumier's drawings and paintings still related to those ordinary people he met and observed as he rode through the villages and countryside.

During this trip, the young artist saw many original paintings previously known to him only through reproductions, including works by Rembrandt, van Gogh, Picasso, and the Impressionists. He had always experienced a feeling of remoteness with reproductions, not only between himself and the reproduced paintings, but especially between himself and the painters. However, standing before the actual works, he was most aware of their surface, feeling that to be able to see the artist's personal "touch on the surface" allowed the viewer to relate more on a human level to the paintings:

> When you get up close, it's marked, the brush strokes are apparent and you get a real sensation that the painter was standing in the same position you often stand in, in front of your own paintings. . . . It was almost as if I could fulfill the role of being the painter.[21]

The young painter was also strongly aware of the tactile quality of the painted surface, especially when confronting work by van Gogh or the Impressionists. One painting that had a tremendous impact on Yates was a late work by Turner which was according to Yates, "quite abstract and spacially oriented."[22] However, the greatest influence of his European sojourn was an awareness of the seriousness with which European society treated art as a very important part of living. Although the young Canadian completed only sketches while in Europe, the trip strengthened his conviction that as a painter, he was "part of a stream that had meaning and strength."[23]

By the end of 1951, Yates was back in Toronto where he got another bookkeeping job for a garment company located on Spadina Road, an interesting ethnic area. Along with Art Symons, an O.C.A. classmate, Yates established a studio on Bloor Street in an old Victorian mansion that the two used on evenings and weekends. He took any commercial work he could get, but after awhile, because he got little painting accomplished, Yates quit his daytime job. He and Symons then established the Laurentian School of Art, teaching classes at night and on weekends. They painted during the day when they were not busy with commercial assignments. At the same time, Yates taught art classes organized by the Ontario Art Gallery Extension Program. He participated in the first "Young Contemporaries" show in 1950, but otherwise found little chance to exhibit.[24] Instead of having an

opportunity to exhibit in established galleries, he and Symons could only show their paintings in the odd theatre lobby or golf club, sometimes making a few sales. Yates exhibited some water color sketches related to his European travels in the Beaches Library in 1952. The fact that the show was favorably reviewed in the Toronto Daily Star was encouraging for the struggling young artist.[25]

In the same year, 1952, Yates produced Girl Drying Her Hair (Plate 3), in which he expresses a new painterly interest, possibly inspired by paintings seen in Europe. The simplified, traditional composition of contrasting diagonal movements consists of primary angles and secondary curves. The use of shapes of non-descriptive color, as opposed to the use of local color, is taken further than in previous works, while the toned down palette of muted blues and roses shows his appreciation of Picasso's early rose and blue periods. The effect of Yates' awareness of the brush strokes of cubist paintings is also evident in that his short strokes are now shaped more like those in the cubist paintings he had seen, and have more emphasis than in earlier works. Again, Yates explores the possibilities of contrasting opposites in composition, color and light, but the detail is more simplified than in earlier works. Perhaps the most important aspect can be seen in his treatment of the ground which has become as important a force as the figure, leading to an overall patterning effect.

During this period (between 1951 and 1954), Yates continued painting water color sketches "on the spot" in his favorite Toronto haunts, where he identified with the people of those neighborhoods. Merry-Go-Round (c.1954) (Plate 4), depicts a Cabbagetown scene. While

painterly concerns are still important, an expression of social comment is equally strong, causing distortion of forms for that purpose. In an attempt to depict symbolically the predicament of the people through the formal aspects of the painting, Yates distorts the horizontals, verticals and diagonals of the observed scene by portraying the buildings oddly foreshortened from different perspective views. This depiction leads to a suggestion of movement around the young child. The happy Merry-Go-Round atmosphere that the title suggests is contrasted to the plight of the child caught in the cycle of poverty. One will see that the use of contrasts in composition, color, and theme, so evident in Merry-Go-Round, remains an important artistic device in Yates' later work. Although this work is painted in a similar manner to the early untitled student water color, the artist's technical skills have improved.

Meanwhile, according to the artist, the Toronto art scene was improving steadily during the early 1950's. While still very provincial in that most of the excitement of avant-garde art remained outside of Canada, there was a feeling that new things were beginning to happen in Toronto. It was precisely at this time, however, that Yates left Toronto to live in Edmonton, which was quite isolated from avant-garde art.

Chapter III

EDMONTON

1954 - 1964

In 1954, Yates accepted a position for one year as an art teacher with the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta. His reintroduction to the Prairie, that he had left as a boy of eighteen occurred dramatically. He experienced heavy rains while driving across Saskatchewan but as he approached the Alberta border, the sky cleared. Yates vividly recalls watching the "landscape change from one of surfaces to one of space."[1] In a later newspaper interview, he likened the feeling to "leaving a small smokey room, walking out on a balcony and taking a deep breath of fresh air."[2]

Upon arriving in Edmonton, however, Yates found a fairly limited art scene with few practising artists. In 1954, Eric Newton, a British art critic, visited Canada to assess the state of the visual arts. Although his stay was short, many of his comments about art on the Prairies are most perceptive:

> The Prairies have perhaps not yet found their own mode of expression. Culturally, the whole area is maturing . . . . New galleries are becoming available for exhibitions, new organizations are being formed to encourage the arts, but the public is, as yet, hardly aware of the importance of the arts . . . [This lack of awareness] leaves the genuine creative artist (and there are many on the Prairies) in a vacuum, a producer with no considerable body of consumers to encourage him.[3]

At this time, the Edmonton Museum of Arts, a conservative society of dedicated art lovers, maintained a policy against giving local artists

solo exhibitions, reinforcing the belief that good art and knowledgable art criticism came from outside of Edmonton and Alberta.[4]

On the other hand, along with his delight in the light and the spacious quality of the landscape, Yates was excited by the sense that "something fresh was beginning to happen in Alberta."[5] In the early 1950's, universities across Canada required instructors for their newly formed Art Departments. This development was advantageous to young artists as it allowed them to remain actively involved with art while gaining financial security. After Yates' first busy year in the Faculty of Education, he was asked to join the Department of Fine Arts, headed by H. G. Glyde. The only other art teacher on staff at the time was the painter, J. B. Taylor. In conjunction with their teaching responsibilities on campus, Yates and the other art professors took part in community education. These duties ranged from such diverse activities as acting as a Special Supervisor of Art in certain selected areas of the province for the provincial school system's summer program, to acting as an art critic for the Edmonton Journal.

In spite of Yates' many commitments associated with his teaching position, he continued to mature artistically. An early attempt by the artist to depict the austere Alberta winters is seen in Winter Landscape (1958) (Plate 5). It is more abstract than previous works, because the forms and ground are interrelated in an almost cubistic way by means of a slight rectangular patterning of the surface. Here, Yates attempts to "allow the forms to expand and have energy that moves from their surfaces and into space."[6] Environmental detail is thus softened and simplified in the process. Yates felt that this

approach led to a much greater awareness by the viewer of the actual surface of the work. The addition of ink markings over the surface also reaffirms the surface of the canvas in contrast to the three-dimensional illusion of the work.

In his first year in Edmonton, Yates had begun an involvement with live theatre at the University of Alberta when he painted the backdrop for an Education Faculty skit. From this experimental beginning, he continued designing sets and costumes for various professional productions for the next fifteen years. Related to his interest in stage design, is a significant sketch, Two Figures in a Space (1960) (Plate 6). The classically balanced, horizontally and vertically oriented composition suggests an enclosed stage-like space in which the artist disposes the figures and planes in a geometric manner. In contrast to the illusionary perspective, the gestural quality of the pencil strokes, overlapping drawn boundaries, restates the surface flatness of the paper. Again, the use of blues and reds for optimum contrast complements the formal contrasts in the composition.

The illusion of reality offered by a stage play obviously intrigued Yates, as the figures, which have become symbolic types in the process of the drawing, challenge the viewer. In Two Figures in a Space, one figure appears on stage in an illusionary role, while the other appears in a stage-like space off-stage. We will see that this idea of contrasting reality and illusion remains an interest throughout Yates' career. At the same time, this painting also illuminates the beginning of a struggle between a symbolically devised human figure and its relationship to the abstraction of the rest of the

canvas, a struggle which is evident for a number of years in Yates' art.

The painter's interest is symbolism led him to simplify and abstract the elements of his paintings away from description. As the title, Figures and Landscape I (1961) (Plate 7), suggests, the dark vertical shapes are symbols for the human form, while the environment is composed of curving lines, reminiscent of the effect seen in Merry-Go-Round. Yates attempts with this gestural painting to allow the vertical forms to "sit on" the surface by virtue of their powerful black color, and yet to also appear to fall back into the enveloping cocoon-like space in an illusionistic manner. Another contrast set up in the composition consists of the muted background which opposes the dark vertical shapes. The technique of using a small area of powerful color in opposition to a large area of muted neutral tone characterizes much of Yates' work, as we shall see.

An excerpt from a talk to fellow artists expresses Yates' concerns at this time:

> . . . Experiment more. Use technique for all its worth and above all, integrate the idea with the technique if you wish to achieve an organic entity.[7]

Following his own advice, he produces works such as Figures and Landscape I, where form and content strengthen each other. The forms suggesting figures appear clustered and separate from their environment, yet the forms and the environment interact dynamically as do people with the real world.[8]

In 1961, Yates designed the sets and costumes for Wilfred Watson's Cockrow and the Gulls.[9] This experience lead to a long-

time professional relationship and personal friendship between Yates and Watson.

In the following year, 1962, Yates designed the sets and costumes for The Lark by Jean Anouilh (Plate 8). This symbolic play allowed Yates to experiment with ideas of symbolism and, at the same time, to manipulate the visual forces in an actual space. The final stage design is quite abstract with costumes oriented to character and sets suggesting the mood and meaning of this play about peace. Visual details, such as candlesticks, for instance, appear as elements of the total composition, so that color and form are utilized as expressively symbolic devices. While Yates was involved in these stage designs, it was exciting for him to realize that he could influence the presentation of the play with these purely visual elements.

In that same year, 1962, Yates' belief in the power of contrasts led him to begin painting a series of nudes. This subject interested him as the nude figure is traditionally an objective, academic subject, as well as a "symbol of humanity." Nude (1962) (Plate 9), combines a realistic figure with a rather unclear, seemingly cubistic setting and expressionistic distortion. The warm and cool tones, creating dark and light areas, add to the contrasts in this painting. The reality and humanness of the nude give a traditional flavor to this academic subject, while the figure is distorted by Yates' idea that she represents humanity surrounded by the now typical cocoon-like setting.[11]

* * *

In 1963, Yates spent a sabbatical year at the University of Durham in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in England, where he met British painter, Victor Pasmore. Since 1952, Pasmore had been producing abstract relief constructions. His constructions are literally three dimensional, mathematically geometric, and simple. He was also a pioneer in the English concept of a design orientation to schools of Fine Art and it was primarily this aspect of Pasmore's work that attracted Yates to spend his sabbatical year in Newcastle-upon-Tyne.[12] The British painter was also designing housing units with architects in a team approach. This very useful extension of an artist's activity, providing aesthetically good living quarters for ordinary people appealed to Yates' political and sociological ideas.

Interestingly, three artists who have influenced Yates - Hagen, Albers, and Pasmore, have a similar sensibility toward simple, geometric works that exhibit a flair for design. Nature is also the purported source for the inspiration of all three. Throughout his career, Yates shares with these older painters a love for a simple, geometric composition based on his own perceptions of nature.

In England, where Yates was aware of the strong sense of atmosphere and surface bathed in a soft light, he continued his personal triangular struggle between symbolism, objective rendering, and abstraction. Landscape (1963) (Plate 10), exhibits an abstraction of the English countryside where form is deployed in an almost cubistic analysis of the scene combined with gestural depiction. The main compositional force is the diagonal road with the small cocoon-like area as the focal point. The feeling of small scale closeness and

surface in England inspired Yates to attempt an overall design forcing objects to the surface of the canvas. He further increases the surface quality using gestural slashes over the forms.

Along with Landscape, Yates carried out another experimental work, New Town (1963) (Plate 11), this time for the purpose of symbolizing the oppressive environment of factory housing.[13] A geometrical distortion of verticals and horizontals expresses the theme austerely. Dark areas relate to each other and also oppose light areas, while a blue line leading back to a small bright red door, reminiscent of Pasmore's approach to color and composition, is evident. Gestural slashes, again, restate the surface, and add to the expressive quality of the work. They also contrast to the smooth rendition of the rest of the composition. The figures are again symbols of those caught in their oppressive surroundings who do not seem to be aware of the blue line leading to the small bright door.

Durham Landscape (1963) (Plate 12), represents the other side of Yates' artistic struggle between abstraction, symbolism, and description. After forcing himself to explore many possibilities in his art, he would return to this type of rather traditional landscape painting for relaxation. This calm descriptive rendering of the scene shows Yates' training and demonstrates his comfort with this approach to landscape. His recent explorations in abstraction, influenced by Pasmore, are evident, however, since Durham Landscape is painted in a looser, more fluid manner than previous works such as Winter Landscape. In composing Durham Landscape, Yates used naturally occurring horizontals and verticals combined with subdued tones so that the

pale English sun is slightly visible through the heavy air.[14]

* * *

Yates returned to Edmonton in 1964, and continued the Nude Series with Return to Olympia (1964) (Plate 13). He gave this name to the work in homage to Manet who took a less academic look at the nude and explored formal problems related to this subject in his Olympia.[15] Gone is the expressively painted symbolic cocoon of Nude. Instead, this painting explores color and shape relationships expressed in the depiction of the nude figure in her environment. While Yates did not want to destroy the two-dimensional surface at this time, his study of Pasmore's work led him to become even more aware of the pictorial space. In Return to Olympia, Yates establishes space by his use of a light and dark contrast of colors, but at the same time, reinforces the surface of the canvas by the shape and size of the color areas. Any distortion of the nude form that occurred in the process of the painting, was allowed to happen.

It appears that these first ten years in Edmonton were a time of artistic struggle and growth for Yates as he sought to establish himself as a professor at the University of Alberta and as a professional practicising artist.[16]

Chapter IV

THE THEME OF POWER

1961 - 1969

Between 1961 and 1965, Yates produced a series of pencil drawings called the Allegoria Series, in which his ideas of symbolism and description entered a new cycle with a political and sociological message. Many of these cartoon-like drawings appeared in the Edmonton based Edge magazine between 1963 and 1967. Edge, an independent periodical edited by Henry Beissel between 1963 and 1969, was dedicated to publishing the work of Canadian poets, authors, and painters. It contained articles denouncing many of the provincial Social Credit government's policies, as well as dissenting opinions on University policies and denunciations on such diverse topics as police brutality and the Viet Nam War. The Allegoria Series which satirizes the abuse of power, complemented many ideas expressed in Edge.

The drawings have simple, dramatic compositions organized along horizontal, vertical, or diagonal patterns. The gnome-like figures depicted are often satirizations of priests, court jesters, or kings and the populace acting in "mobs".[1] The works range from comical satire where the figures appear to be simply silly to more sobering depictions of cruelty. Allegoria 3 (1964) (Plate 14), exemplifies Yates' fine draughtsmanship, and is one of the few pencil drawings discussed in Arnold Rockman's "How 20 Canadians Draw the Line."[2] The composition consists of a dramatic movement with seconary circular forms that sweep the gnome-like creatures unthinkingly along. No

intelligent individual actions are seen as they all join the noisy drummer in his cause.

The common element of all the Allegoria drawings is the appearance of pencil marks on paper applied in a fine and similar manner. This series relates to Yates' mature Land Drawings in the way that the "mark" is applied to the surface of the paper, and the large amounts of white paper left untouched by the pencil.

Yates spent the summer of 1965 at the University of British Columbia as a visiting professor. During that time, he seriously analyzed his work, acknowledging the several directions in which it was moving. Following this period of introspection, Yates attempted to reconcile all of his ideas of description and abstraction, illusionary perspective and pictorial surface, and satire and symbolism. The experimental Throne Room Series which resulted consists of drawings in pencil and paintings in acrylic. Wood, metal foil, and found objects are added to the acrylic works.[3]

With the new series, Yates continued the theme of the "abuse of power" from the Allegoria Series. Moving away from a fairly realistic approach toward a highly symbolic approach, he created a "personal mythology" of power symbols from within his own experiences as well as from more established symbols which he freely adopted for his own expressive mode.[4] In this excerpt from an article written for Edge, Yates discussed the thematic core of his work:

> My aim is to play the symbol. The symbol is derived from the congestion of the imagemakers. There is, of course, more to the world than just the power struggle, but it happens that at this moment in time it is this that has caught my eye and my symbol.[5]

A simplified queen figure became one of Yates' central symbols of power at this time. In Queen Head (1965) (Plate 15), Yates again uses a simple composition consisting of a central vertical emphasis combined with secondary circular shapes. The drawing is rendered in powerful, aggressive strokes which give rise to unpleasant tactile and visual sensations to indicate the queen's abuse of power. In fact, the strokes are so energetic that at times they seem to vie for power with the monstrous cyclops.

Wall Painting I (1968) (Plate 16), is an interesting example of Yates' attempt to bring many ideas together. The classically balanced composition of verticals and horizontals combined with a small foil circle is perceived at a distance as an abstract field. However, a small area at the bottom, containing rows of real soldiers backed up by illusionary soldiers rendered in perspective in bright color, changes the way we perceive and relate to the work as we observe it more closely.[6] One wonders whether the tiny figures dwarfed by a flat color area are placed in front of a landscape with an horizon, or a great wall? Is the rising form a geometric design on a flat surface, or is it the corner of a wall? In this painting, Yates plays his favorite game, setting up contrasts and dynamic relationships. Not only do the surface-oriented areas, like the vertical strip of wood, the metal circle, or the toy soldiers, produce contrasting tactile sensations, but they also contrast to the visual reference of the realistically rendered soldiers that recede into depth. The reality of the wooden strip also contrasts to the horizontal painted line, while the varied handling of paint and the contrast between hard and soft edges also produce various tactile and visual effects. Yates

explains that once the viewer is captured by the painting, the "actual object, the painted illusion, the formal structure, and the symbol all combine to engage the viewer, to envelop his mind, and to invite reciprocity."[7]

In these works, Yates developed a symbolic vocabulary that strengthens as the viewer's conscious and subconscious associations with the symbols increase. The choice of symbols referring to British sovereignty is an obvious one, considering Britain's long history of power and imperialism. At the same time, Yates' recent visit to England and many connections with that country, could also have influenced his choice of symbols. Linking the sovereignty symbol with war, which can be seen as the ultimate abuse of power, the artist creates a powerful recurring theme. Here, in Wall Painting I, tiny, helpless, identical soldiers face each other in never-ending rows as they surely face death in a war called by some powerful force.

Another painting, Revolving Credit (1968) (Plate 17), is part of the same series, now referring pictorically to medals. At the same time, Yates was equally concerned with formal problems and expresses this concern in the surface relationships of the forms and colors.[8] Here, once again, the artist sets up compositional contrasts between horizontal, vertical, and circular movements. The varied handling of the paint and the addition of wood and metal all provide contrast. As well, strong color contrasts, like that between the black and the yellow, are also evident. "The focal point, the central medal, shines and gleams with the reality of the surface while the perspective foreshortening carries it back into space."[9] Joan Lowndes, a Vancouver art critic, commented on "the constant interplay between the

real and the unreal - the real tin medals with painted ribbons . . . - [which] suggest by intension the illusory nature of our sacrifices and our hopes."[10]

The circular shape, the simplified lion form derived from Greek mythology appearing on the medals, and the queen figure just visible in shadow behind the medals, are all part of Yates' personal mythology. As one becomes familiar with the series, one sees that Yates uses the same symbols with different nuances of meaning:

> A primordial image, the life circle, merges with the content manifest in the visual metaphor of a shiny metal. Collective merges with individual: primordial translates into now . . . The sovereignty symbol offers less direct but no less powerful access into the work.[11]

The medals are, of course, another symbol of war. In "Metal Flags And Cloth Medals" published in Edge in 1969, Yates tells the story of a sixteen year old hero who was killed earning his medal.[12] The artist seems to see "in the hero the sense of absurdity that is the hero's role in history."[13] To strengthen the symbolism, the titles in this series are often verbal puns. In Revolving Credit, for example, the medal is also a coin (sovereign), representing power; linking money, war, power, and the cyclical nature of power.

Another related work is Wall Painting II (1969) (Plate 18), where we see a painted medal against a foil ground, showing a use of the same material to create figure and ground opposite to that seen in Revolving Credit. Several juxtapositions once again form Wall Painting II. Here Yates contrasts a circular area to a rectangular area, the dominant colors blue and red, and the rough texture of the foil to the smoothly applied paint. In addition to the obvious use of

contrast, Yates also intends to extend the painting into the viewers realm, creating new surfaces in front of the canvas by the addition of the foil. In this way Yates hoped to "help open the gate and reduce the distance for the viewing or touching participant," the viewer.[14]

Yates' technique of using a small area with great power is also evident in Wall Painting II. Here, the small base is an important, actively charged area which consists of realistically rendered soldiers seen in perspective under the huge circle. The area functions as an optically illusive one that can be perceived simply as a base upon which the great disc rests. It is only upon closer inspection that one notices the soldiers. The power base is the army, pictorially and symbolically. So again, one finds that a small active area affects the painting dramatically.

This painting relies, to some extent, on shapes and colors to trigger perceptual associations. Like other Alberta artists at that time, Yates seems to attempt to come to terms with the work of the New York School painters, like Rothko and Motherwell, and the power of their non-figurative canvases. Yates finally decided that the formal, structural, non-figurative element was not enough. In his opinion, the paintings would be strengthened and have a richer quality if symbolism, figurative elements, and viewer manipulation were used in conjunction with the "abstract image."[15] In the 1969 essay "Metal Flags And Cloth Medals", Yates explains this attitude:

> My paintings at the moment are not intended to be merely political gestures but rather visual explorations into the rituals and postures of power. In the process leading to this point, I have followed, at least partially, an allegorical path, if allegory, as distinct from pure symbolism, is defined as a more conscious differential between

> the sign and the thing signified (a distinction which is not always easily distinguished or desired). Is there room for the image-symbol and the formal structure together? The total work is a symbol, but in my mind there is importance in the significance of the real world and its objects, a significance that becomes apparent in the compressed content-structure of an object-painting.[16]

The arrangement of the forms and colors on the canvas, the materials used, and the viewer's recognition of the artist's personal mythology work together to give Wall Painting II a dynamic, powerful quality. The large medal resting on its perceptually "active" power base restates Yates' intrigue with the dynamic relationship between illusion and reality.

Jim Salt, an Edmonton play-wright, believes that Yates has created not only a personal mythology, but a "mythology of the human senses" with the Throne Room Series:

> . . . The world which Yates' images create for themselves is a total one to be experienced by the ear and the touch as well as by the eye. . . . It is very difficult to see in a new way, or without the aid of current visual convention. It is even more difficult to retain a sensory equilibrium against the unbalancing experience of new vision involving all of the senses.[17]

Along with many other people in the 1960's, Salt was obviously imbued with the ideas of Marshall McLuhan who argued that "our human senses, of which all media are extensions, are also fixed charges on our personal energies, and that they also configure the awareness and experience of each one of us. . . . "[18] McLuhan's belief that the printed word lead the people belonging to the western civilization to become "linear thinkers" and excessively involved with only one sense,

sight, to the detriment of others is well known. Salt seems to agree with McLuhan:

> The isolation of the sense of sight . . . is an abstraction of a damaging kind . . . the highly optical - or specialized sort of visual age from which we are emerging tended to debase the tactile sense, ...[19]

These observations by Salt make one wonder if Yates was influenced by McLuhan during the making of the Throne Room Series. Yates became aware of the theories of McLuhan, through his book, Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man, when it was published in 1964.[20] However, Yates' own research into painting seems to parallel ideas expressed by McLuhan in some instances, and are not necessarily taken from McLuhan. Yates had been interested for some time in an overall patterning of the surface as opposed to focusing on one area, the textural quality of the canvas, and viewer manipulation. However, Yates credits McLuhan for the excitement he generated, encouraging others to question the way in which they perceive the world. In this way, he forced artists to question their work, their values and their lives. In a broader sense, Yates sees McLuhan as a "typification of the questioning that occurred in the 1960's."[21] Similarly, the Throne Room Series is typical of the 1960's when society in general questioned reality, illusion, and power.

Chapter V

EXTENSIONS

1966 - 1972

As the 1970's approached, Yates became increasingly involved with the artistic possibilities of various media such as photography, holography, and film making. Although he later abandoned these experiments, it was his explorations in these diverging directions that actually advanced his understanding of spacial concepts and their application to the more traditional arts, drawing and painting.

In the late 1960's, Yates executed two murals, one for the Engineering Building on the University of Alberta Campus and another for the Edmonton Centennial Library. The format, scale, and surface quality of these works, combined with the abstract symbolism pertaining to humanity relates to Yates' later Landspace Series.

In designing the large Engineering building mural (1966) (Plate 19), Yates combined ideas of abstract symbolism with the reality of the physical structure of the wall. The problem presented by the mural was one of being able to move away from creating an illusion on canvas to one of the creation of an absolutely structural surface. Yates cooperated with engineers who designed the actual structure, while the artist had complete artistic freedom over the appearance of the surface. Important to Yates at the time was a continuing contact with other disciplines within a spirit of communal cooperation.

According to the artist, the actual designing and executing process became a truly educational experience. The need to continually

conceptualize the finished work as he carved the forms in reverse in styrofoam, enabled him to understand the dynamic relationship between form and surface in a new way. Another challenge associated with the commission, in addition to the need to conceptualize the finished work, was the great scale of the piece.

Yates has said that during the 1960's, he was involved with the action of the visual metaphor, the verb as opposed to the noun, in McLuhanesque terms.[1] This mural, consisting of a large vertical slab resting on the horizontal ground is no exception. A seed-like form appears to be inserted into the ground and the symbolism of growth and opening-up is paralleled by the vertical rise of the slab and echoed in each circular shape. The growth of humanity is thus symbolized by the changing forms. In each of the first four circles, the artist adapted ancient symbols. The fifth symbol, the ancient growth spiral, marks a division between the traditional symbolism and Yates' personal symbols that appear in the rest of the slab. However, the symbols located higher retain some relationship to the lower ones. The top one symbolizes technology, as is appropriate for an Engineering building. This mural foreshadows Yates' interest during the late 1960's in revitalizing art through technical electronic explorations, as we shall see. The composition of as vertical rise suggesting human presence in contrast to the horizontal earth or nature is a recurring aspect of his work and is used several times in the Landspace Series.

Yates first attempted to depict the spacial effect of the open prairie landscape and changing horizon in a symbolic manner in another mural. It is fitting that the inspiration for the Centennial Library

mural (1967) (Plate 20), came from the traditional art of the Plains Indians. Here, the artist attempts to deal visually with the Alberta landscape, partly from a non-European indigenous point of view.

Again, Yates began an industrial relationship, this time with plasterers, from whom he leaned to prepare a surface that would permit the carving technique used on this mural. The carved lines push the forms to the surface, giving the work both a surface and a tactile quality. Yates explained his intentions of fusing visual and tactile qualities in this mural in a statement written shortly after its completion:

> My understanding at the time of the installation was that this room was to be used as a general reading and relaxing room. The mural could provide a visual focal point and was placed in such a position that it could be seen equally well inside or outside the building. The surface is intended to be attracting in a tactile way as well as visual, containing edges and textures for this purpose; and is protected by acrylic varnish sufficiently to survive the touch of hands over a long term period.[2]

In this mural, two verticals contrast to "curving energy lines" that sweep back and forth across the surface, while a deep blue and a bright yellow form a dark, light color contrast. Although the symbolism pertains to Alberta, as we shall see, the formal style of the mural is rooted in the international tradition, reminding one of the expressive, cubistic works of Lyonel Feininger, in its abstract, geometrical organization of the pictorial space.[3]

According to the artist, the two verticals are intended to express stability and timelessness, while the relationship between the two red symbols suggests a horizon. Carrying on the symbolism of nature, the interrelationship of light and dark tones suggests the

cycle of life and nature. Yates freely interpreted North American Plains Indian pictographic symbols for this mural, and explains them in the following passage:

> In very general terms then, the symbols on the red column starting from the top could be interpreted as a grouping of stars or constellation; a sun figure; a single star; and at the bottom, a symbol for mountains. To the right, the cross figure could mean cross-roads or meeting place; sun figure again; and the opposing arrows, storm or conflict. Below the sun figure the oblong configuration could mean dwelling place or "life" and below that the ancient growth spiral. . . . The purpose of introducing the pictographic type of symbol was to give a sense of the first presence of intelligent man, in this case, the Indians of the prairies, on the developing natural scene, just as the general abstraction of energy forces in the whole mural uses a contemporary symbolism as the means of expression for people now. Thus, interlocked with the great forces of nature are the symbols of the first inhabitants and the present inhabitants, the old with the new.[4]

In 1967, Yates received a commission to design a flag for the City of Edmonton (Plate 21). In the classically balanced composition that resulted, the artist utilized his ability to design simple forms on a large scale, which are meant to be viewed from a long distance. Yates enjoyed creating a symbol for the people. Something that he had satirized in the past, the flag, he now attempted to make humanly meaningful. The traditional symbols appearing on the flag: earth, fire, water and air, relate to Edmonton's surrounding rich land, fields, sun, river, and sky.

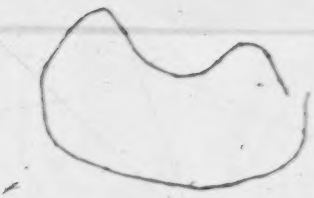
As the city grew and acquired its own flag, the art scene also changed rapidly in the years following Yates' arrival in Edmonton in 1954. The Edmonton Art Gallery sponsored the "Air Art" and "Place and Process" exhibitions in 1969 which drew national and international attention.[5] Yates was also involved in the "new art" as is exempli-

fied by his 1969 exhibition at the Students' Union Building Art Gallery on the University of Alberta campus. Yates borrowed a McLuhanesque term and called the exhibition "Extensions," as he "pursued his art beyond the limits of the canvas."[6] The painter explained his goal for the exhibition:

> Up to this time most exhibitions of my work have consisted almost exclusively of paintings and drawings, with variations and developments occurring with those media. In this exhibition I have decided to extend the format to give some indication of new developments and provide a sampling of other areas of interest. . . . I think probably this exhibition represents for me a transition from a concentration on one medium and the 'object d'art' toward a broader and more mobile visual exploration with much less emphasis on the fixed and permanent.[7]

However, Yates did not agree with McLuhan that the traditional arts belong to a vanished world.[8] The painter, on the other hand, stated that he wished to maintain "the rich medium of painting but also create an expansion from its surface when creative interaction demands such extensions."[9]

A discussion of one of the pieces in the exhibit, Kinetic Foil (1969) (Plate 22), will serve to illustrate Yates' interest in environmental art and thus spacial ideas.[10] His now familiar balanced composition of verticals resting on a horizontal base is evident in the foil corridor, which consists of a serial alignment of identical objects. An observation made by Donald Buchanan in his essay, "A Prairie Approach to a Canadian Vision," aids in our understanding of Kinetic Foil. He begins his essay with a discussion of the lasting impact of the Prairie on early childhood visions:



> The beauty of the sky broken only by the raw crude lines of telephone poles and wires. To those growing up on the prairies these are the first images of Canadian landscape and the most lasting ones.11

This lasting vision of multiple verticals on the horizontal land repeated endlessly in a row, is evident in Kinetic Foil.

The dynamism of the piece is obvious. The viewer, also a vertical element, becomes part of the composition once he enters the corridor. The shiny silver foil interacts with the exhibition space and changes constantly as it is affected by changes in lighting, movement of the viewer, and even general traffic on the other side of the window beyond the work. The reflective quality brings other colors and forms into the constantly changing work as secondary compositional elements. The work also demonstrates Yates' interest in contrasts between light and dark, as the reflection is so great, that at times, the piece appears to produce light.

Yates had first noticed the auditory and tactile effects of foil while watching actors interact with a stage set that utilized that material. In Kinetic Foil, the viewer's interaction with the work of art is evident on many levels, as the nature of the piece encourages the viewer to move, to make noise, and to touch the material. At the same time, the viewer's movement causes the work itself to move and to create sound. The attempt to revitalize art and make it into something to which ordinary people could relate is important to Yates and evident in Kinetic Foil. Myra Davies discussed that aspect of the work in her essay, "Modern art questions the validity of traditional art and society":

> . . . Environmentalism questions structures of traditional art and suggests that art can be anything perceived by anyone at any time.
>
> Many contemporary artists are concerned with the environment and man's relationship with it.
>
> . . . The aesthetic thought behind contemporary art works or projects brings art back to every man. No one has to buy from Norman Yates his aluminum foil corridor . . . it is art that can be individually created after as trip to Safeway. Intended as experience, it cannot be owned. It does not exist until it is experienced. And there is no reason why it has to be called art.[12]

The movement, sound, and reflection of Kinetic Foil extends past the formal aspects, to the theme of the work. The real viewer participates in the virtual image (the reflection) of the foil corridor, becoming part of the surface of the work; while the work itself seems to take on life by its movement and sound at the same time as it stimulates the viewer to "play" with the piece. The theme of a human entering a new space and beginning a dynamic relationship with that space becomes an integral one in Yates' later Landspace works. With "Extensions," it is quite clear that spacial concepts have now come together in Yates' work from stage designs, paintings, and experiments in various media.

In 1969, Yates took part in an exciting experimental theatre event when he designed the sets and costumes for Wilfred Watson's Let's Murder Clymenestra according to the Principles of Marshall McLuhan (Plate 23). The play "suggested to [Yates] a new kind of design possibility, a shimmering non-permanent flexbile space, four-dimensional and dynamic."[13] Because the play was expressionistic and symbolic, Yates felt free to experiment and therefore he gave the audience an electronically produced multi-spacial view of the action.

By this time, Yates was familiar with Marshall McLuhan's ideas of our focusing on one thing to the detriment of the whole, as is clearly indicated from this excerpt from a lecture about the play given by the set designer:

> Perhaps since the Renaissance, visually we have built a tradition of focus--one thing at a time with a centre of interest, a principle of domination and subordination. Yet when we are driving a car, our peripheral vision usually operates at maximum if we are to survive and in another way, while walking through the woods, say in a relaxed fashion, our eyes and mind wander and stray, a shaft of light there, a brilliant colour contrast there and so on. In the theatre we have become accustomed to proscenium centering of live action and the habit is difficult to break perhaps. Whatever the result, I was hopeful of making the technology work for us rather than the reverse, and let the instruments become part of the scene.[14]

Yates thought it would be interesting to let the audience have a full view of what was happening on all sides. One immediately thinks of a similar idea expressed by the early cubists nearly sixty years earlier. Now, with the art of electronic media, the idea of simultaneity was possible to apply in a new way to a stage play. The electronically produced multi-spacial view made possible with cameras, sixteen monitors and a large telebeam screen was an exciting experiment in exploring the perception of space.

What resulted were sixteen (serial) images of the set. The red and blue glowing columns, combined with the horizontal plastic strips framing the action showed the audience images often missed in a stage play like the "off-side view, the intimate close-up, the hidden gesture, the glinting eye, the sensuous mouth or the suggestive action--a multi-image of the live action."[15] The extravagant set

was perfectly reconciled with Marshall McLuhan's theories, but unfortunately it confused the audience somewhat.

For Yates, some of the most fascinating images were created by the actors in relation to the image on the large screen. He explained that "scale is always fascinating and a face in sensitive expression some ten feet high and only twenty feet away can be quite powerful."[16] So, with his design for another Watson play, Up Against the Wall Oedipus (Plate 24), in 1970, Yates carried on the exploration of the effects of scale relationships from "Clymenestra." Filmed sequences of the play were related to live actors and projected on a huge screen at the back of the stage, which had a visual effect of dwarfing the live action. This unique spacial effect of overwhelming scale and dramatic scale relationships interested Yates. He was also excited by his ability to manipulate the electronic media both visually and auditorially so that the filmed sequences described the scale of a great space while the play was actually compressed onto the stage, a relatively small space. An exploration into the various artistic uses of scale and focus so prominant in this stage design became increasingly important to Yates in the 1970's.

From 1970 to 1972, Yates did not produce any paintings, but instead concentrated on photography and film making. He also organized, hosted, and did the cinematography for three educational programs for CTV, which gave him the opportunity to combine his ideas on education with his interest in the media of television.[17] At the same time, he maintained his activity in various educational and artistic organizations.[18]

In 1971, Yates joined the White Pelican magazine. This magazine, a quarterly review of the arts, was started by its general editor, Sheila Watson. Between 1971 and 1976, Yates co-edited one issue a year, usually with John Orrell.[19] While Yates worked on the magazine, he further developed his visual ideas on the relationship between parts. This interest lead him to make book-like collages of drawings or photographs related to sequence, seriality and the development of an idea over time. In one self-portrait series done in 1971 for the White Pelican, titled Self Portrait with 3M (1972), Yates relates vertical bars to his physical self which slowly disappear, finally leaving only a horizontal line across the center of the page, expressing his ultimate death and union with the land or nature.[20]

Looking back now, Yates recalls that during most of the 1960's, "almost as a reflection of the exciting decade with its many crises, [he] felt uncertain and unfilfilled in his art."[21] He looks back at the time as a period of what he calls "flailing about", as he tried to determine a means to the acheievement of his concept of art. In retrospect, Yates now sees that whole decade of his life as a period of a second maturing. He found his work with various media, like film making, too physically demanding, and ultimately left the whole electronic and technological exploration with some weariness. Thus, Yates returned to the "purity of drawing and painting after all the excitement of experimentation."[22]

Chapter VI

FOCUS

1972 - 1974

In 1972, Yates took part in a group exhibition called "For an Independent Hairy Hill" in which some Alberta artists with similar interests decided to make a statement in rebellion against the notion that their "grass roots" culture was being "swamped often electronically by ideas from other spaces like eastern Canada and the United States."[1] In his introduction to the exhibition catalogue, called "A Disappearing West," Tom Radford eloquently explains the historical position of Western Canada in economic and sociological terms:

> It was unfortunate that the people who settled the West ultimately had little control over how their society was to develop. No matter how distant the industrial East might have seemed from the West in 1904, it was there that the fate of the West was being decided. . . . Eastern companies had invested a great deal of money in the Canadian West and, in exchange, they assumed control of the region's economy. For them, the West was an area rich in exploitable resources, and once they succeeded in attracting a working population to the region, they had all the components of a high-profit operation - an operation designed above all to profit distant men in distant markets, men with little feeling for the needs and hopes of the residents of Hairy Hill, Alberta.[2]

Radford goes on to point out that agrarian land use, specifically, in Alberta has been controlled by distant economic needs, far beyond the control of the local farmers. During the 1960's particularly, it became harder and harder for a family farm to survive. The resulting disappearance of small farms and small farming towns disrupted the

continuous way of life associated with prairie farming.

George Melnyk, an enlightened spokesperson for prairie writers, poets and painters, believes that although the West has developed under outside economic control, westerners have retained a strong regional identity. In an article published in the White Pelican called "For an Independent Hairy Hill," Melnyk reasons that because of its history and geography, the West has produced "social and political traditions separate from other regions of Canada."[3] In another essay titled "From the People - From the Land - The Art of Norman Yates," Melnyk further argues that the land has been the most important factor in the western identity, stating "the only barrier that has stood in the way of having the western self totally defined or absorbed by the [East] has been the land."[4] The artists who participated in the "Hairy Hill" exhibition seemed to agree with Melnyk about the importance of the land to the Albertan cultural identity. For, while the exhibition had a strongly rebellious theme against the outside influences on Alberta, another important underlying theme which further unified the exhibition was the evidence of a strong relationship between each artist and this land. In this same spirit of cultural awareness, Norman Yates later acknowledged his close feelings for the land:

> Western history and western landscape are bound inextricably. The land is part and parcel of our history and our history has to do absolutely with the land. For me, the land is our basic metaphor.[5]

In the above mentioned essay, "From the People - From the Land - The Art of Norman Yates," George Melnyk mentions how Alberta's geographic

position has isolated Alberta artists from the mainstream art movements which originate in the East. He believes that Norman Yates' art "reflects the struggle of being an artist in the West, of creating on the periphery of contemporary art movements rather than at its center."[6] This observation by Melnyk is probably true, however by the early 1970's, while Alberta was rapidly emerging as a confident, powerful province, Yates voiced this new confidence felt by many Alberta artists that made the "Hairy Hill" show possible:

> The Alberta artist should not feel at any disadvantage because he is not living in Toronto. He may not get the international recognition that a Toronto or New York artist has access to by virtue of location but he is capable of the same art. A narrow regionalism is just no longer possible. . . . Art, good art, is being made at a lot of odd and out of the way places now. London, New York and Paris are not the ultimate source of aesthetic influence. . . .[7]

Interest in the vital new art scene in Alberta and in the prairie provinces in general, spread to other parts of Canada and enough excitement was generated to warrant the autumn, 1972 edition of Arts Canada with its theme "Prairie Spaces and Places."[8]

Parallel to the general revitalization of the Alberta art scene, Yates sees his involvement in the "Hairy Hill'" exhibition as a personal artistic milestone. Rarticipation in the exhibition forced him to bring his ideas together once more as he had in the summer of 1965, but now there was a solid focus to his art. While the show's theme was important to Yates and one with which he sympathized, more important to the artist was a continuing exploration of the formal spacial components of a drawing or painting now related to his roots as a western Canadian and to the space of the West itself. Yates has

observed that for him "the beginning of the 1970's was as if someone opened a door."[9] With our examination of Yates' drawings and paintings of the 1970's, we will retrace his journey through the passageway into the new "space."

Four Space Elevator with Brand (1972) (Plate 25), which appears on the "Hairy Hill" catalogue cover, marks a significant turning point in Yates' oeuvre. With this drawing, he turned his back on all the excitement and experimentation with various media typical of the 1960's and returned to the purity and tradition of drawing.[10] The prairie grain elevator is itself a traditional image in the visual arts of the West, as landscape painters have for years been inspired by its vertical form contrasting to the empty Prairie. Here, however, Yates has given the mundane subject new life. The elevator has been recreated into a large vertical monument expanding over the four sheets of paper which are arranged vertically with a small margin between each sheet of paper. These horizontal breaks between the sections restate the literal surface of the format of the pieces of paper as they add a horizontal element to the total composition. The contrasting diagonals of the logo on the elevator echo the diagonals of the roof of this building. The finely drawn lines, either horizontal or vertical, add to the strength of the simple, but striking composition.

Formally, this drawing explores the concept of "focus." The idea occurred to Yates when he was in the country film making, although he did not produce the drawing until sometime later after the idea had distilled in his mind. He realized that if he were close enough to get the detailed character of the elevator, the texture and

color of the peeling, broken boards, he would lose the whole image; and if he were distant enough to capture the whole, he would lose the particular details. So in relation to space, he attempted to use the concept of focus as a useful, expressive device.

To compose the whole image, Yates drew parts of the landscape and elevator on different large pieces of paper at a fairly short distance from his subject and then attached the "modules" together. (One cannot help but think of Eric Friefield producing charcoal drawings on large sheets of paper tacked up at the front of his crowded classroom many years ago). The resulting image of the elevator is ten feet tall, and in spite of its size it retains a great deal of detail. This seemingly simple idea of retaining two focuses, one of surface detail or description and the other of the gestalt or the whole in the same two-dimensional space excited Yates as he felt that he was coming closer to understanding spacial relationships. Another characteristic of the drawing, of which Yates was aware, was that separately each piece of paper formed an abstract drawing and if that concept were pursued, each detailed, descriptive work, depending on "focus," might appear as a non-figurative image.

Yates was experimenting here with "focus." He reduced the color to a black and white range in order to concentrate on the main issue. At the same time, the use of black and white is related to photography and film making, art forms with which Yates had been involved since the late 1960's. This color choice also relates to the black and white photographs of Yates' childhood, as well as the color of old newspapers and magazines which as visual references to the past often seem to affect one's memory in recalling old scenes one has seen in

print. Finally, the black and white tones appear to give a general documentary character to the drawing. For all of these aspects then, the drawing captures the directness of the common Alberta scene of a grain elevator on the Prairie.

In contrast to the large size of the work, the politically oriented symbolism is carried by a fairly small area. A corporate symbol appears here alone, instead of the name of a small prairie town, as is sometimes seen on a grain elevator. Yates implies here that the typical prairie image which Westerners see as their own is owned and controlled by a far-off corporation.

In the years following Four Space Elevator with Brand, Yates continued to carry on the modular concept with great simplicity, producing the Regina Riot Series which was part of the Survival Series, and the Quarter Section Series. Speaking of some of these drawings which were shown at the Edmonton Art Gallery in 1973 under the title "May This Land Survive," Yates explains their content:

> The drawings represent events of survival in time and space. For me the event can be an experience brought forward from a boyhood episode in Regina, or the majesty of the Alberta landscape as I feel it now.[11]

In an interesting publication, Survival - A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature, Margaret Atwood delivers a strong argument that "survival" is the central Canadian symbol.[12] In the same vein historian Victor Hoar argues that the Depression, which Yates has represented in the Regina Riot Series, was a period when Canadians struggled simply to survive.[13] Similarily, Yates believes that the history of western Canadian people is a history of survival and concurrent with this idea

is Yates' personal struggle to become an artist against the advice of almost everyone, and his continuous artistic struggle to find a form of expression with real meaning related to his own life. Yates' work of the 1970's then can be seen as a celebration of his personal and artistic survival.

The focus on "space" that became Yates' greatest pictorial interest in 1972 did not separate itself from his long time interest in humanity. In depicting the Regina Riot, Yates combined an historical event that became a symbol with a distinct personal memory from his own past, which took him back to a time and an issue that he felt was important to both himself and to prairie people in general. Now with a new self-confidence in the worth of the Prairies and prairie artists, Yates, in his depiction of the Regina Riot, begins to explore the possibilities of solving the spacial dilemma of the open Prairie in a new way. He recalls how he began to understand the method of overcoming this dilemma:

> The notion that space could be observed not only in perspective depth that is our normal way, but if you could blind yourself to that notion of perspective depth, if you could "feel" the space evenly well to left and to right, up and down--that's another kind of space--that has depth and dimension rather than going directly away from your eyes into space. That is more the oriental concept of space . . . . What it meant to me was a solution toward maintaining the surface. That kind of space is related to surface more than to perspective illusion.[14]

In forming Two Space Regina Riot 1935 (1972) (Plate 26), Yates joined two pieces of paper together laterally. With this totally horizontal basic component which obviously relates to the open prairie landscape, he understood for the first time the power of the oriental

format which leads to the portrayal of frontal, surface space. Within the perimeter set for himself, he felt that he could use a western illusion of depth and still maintain the surface in his mind. While the division between the two pieces of paper acts as a surface-maintaining device, Yates visually perceived the surface of the white paper surrounding the division as space. For the first time, he realized that the physical quality of the surface of the paper could be equated with space, and any added "marks" would have to relate to either the surface of the paper or to illusionary depth, and if possible, to both.

The paradox between attempting to express limitless space on a two-dimensional surface, which had bothered him for some time, began to resolve itself in the artist's mind. He began to see the problem more as the dialectic of two attitudes toward perceiving and portraying space. The two poles could relate and enhance each other almost in an oriental sense, and not confront each other as two opposites in the western sense. Yates expresses his view of the dialectical nature of the world which he had formed slowly over the years:

> I tend to see the world. . . as a series of relationships with differences. Dualities may occur and there may be opposites occurring but they're always dynamic. Night and day are not opposites, but they are transitional things that occur. They move through a space where the relationships are sometimes very close and sometimes quite far apart. Relationships are stronger than opposites. The relationships start from the point where one happens to be located and that's what I sense to be a dynamic force.[15]

In keeping with his philosophy of the nature of visual relationships in the world, Yates attempts to have the diverse visual components of his work relate as well. In this drawing, Two Space

Regina Riot, a concentration of light and dark areas reinforces the visual power of each area. In the center of the work surrounding the actual division (the surface-making device) one finds the large area of pure white paper (the spacial element). This area appears bathed in the "harsh, brilliant, big, bright light" of the Prairie.[16] Where the pieces of paper meet on the surface, there are pressures and tensions. These pressures expand laterally toward the contrasting darks which are grouped toward the outer edges. Yates, with his long time interest in the relationship of the viewer to the work of art, tended to place himself in front of the center of the work, thus perceiving the pictorial space expanding laterally in either direction.

Yates extends his idea of the duality of nature to the marks that he adds to the white surface as well. The simple, economical lines which describe figurative elements like a person or a car also perform "abstractly on the surface and into space as a line."[17] Although the large size of the cars indicates their positions in the foreground of the scene, the large amount of white paper within the lines makes the cars appear to sink back into the distance away from the pictorial surface. On the other hand, the small, sharp silhouette of a figure can, at times, appear to move up to the surface as it catches our immediate attention, having as strong a focal power as the much larger cars. Because of the strength of the small area of concentrated black, the silhouetted figure can also be perceived as a "hole" or opening in the surface. On the other hand, because of its small size, the figure can appear as an object in the far distance in the sense of the scale relationships in western perspective. This spacial dichotomy consisting of a dynamic interplay between the

observer's perception of surface and depth as opposed to a drawing based upon a mathematical perspective system, where all horizontal lines come together in a vanishing point on the horizon, characterizes the illusive quality of space which Yates attempts to capture in the fixed format of a drawing. This broad concept becomes a focus for him during the years of 1972 to 1974, and continues into the present time.

After this formal analysis of Two Space Regina Riot 1935, the iconography of the work should be considered. The narrative content of this drawing deals with the Regina Riot that Yates had witnessed as a boy. The "On to Ottawa Trek" that ended tragically in Regina on July 1, 1935, began on June 3rd in Vancouver, when strikers from some of the Depression Relief Camps began a cross-Canada journey to take their grievances to Ottawa. They protested not only the low pay and physical hardships of life in the dreary camps, but also their feeling of having been isolated and abandoned by the federal government. As they crossed the Prairies, the well-organized trekkers won the support of many of the people they met. However, on June 11th, Prime Minister Bennett secretly instructed the R.C.M.P. Assistant Commissioner in Regina to forcibly stop "the Trek" when it reached that city. On the evening of July 1st, a rally involving many Regina citizens was underway in Market Square, to raise money for the trekkers. (Many of the trekkers were from Saskatchewan, one of the provinces hit hard by the Depression). The R.C.M.P. planned to arrest the seven leaders of "the Trek" at the sound of a whistled signal. However, when the signal was given, a riot broke out, which resulted in the death of one Regina police officer and injuries to several people. The authorities were successful in stopping "the Trek" as the strikers dispersed within a

couple of days after the riot. The work camps were finally closed down after the federal Liberal government had been in office for one year.[18] With this drawing of the Regina Riot, Yates has combined form and content to create "the unity of the western landscape with western history. . . . Though the historical setting is urban, the prairie landscape is there in its overpowering horizontal presence, in the black and white bleakness of the depression and the fruitless land."[19]

Another drawing of the series, Three Space Regina Riot 1935 I (1972) (Plate 27), relies on a format of vertical components to enhance the space and content of the work. While each of the modules at first appears to represent foreground, mid-zone, and far distance, the space is not so simply defined. In spite of its oriental appearance, the definition of space in this drawing shows the influence of Quebec painter Jean Paul Lemieux whose work profoundly impressed Yates. In a painting like January in Quebec City (1965), Lemieux's arrangement of the vertical figure in a limitless vista of landscape takes advantage of size relationships primarily as a mode of creating space. Yates explains what he sees as Lemieux's use of this technique:

> It embodies the notion of a dynamic balance between the vertical and relatively horizontal flow of space behind. A concentration of a huge figure contrasts against a ground, which is greyed and allowed to expand beyond. This a method of direct size relationships.[20]

In much the same way as Lemieux, Yates, in Three Space Regina Riot 1935 I, uses a large figure placed at the edge of the paper contrasting to a great vista of horizontal space. The expansive feeling of

space represented by the large areas of white paper contrasts to the surface arrangement of a "zig zag" of dark marks which appears to interact like a lightening bolt with the spacious emptiness of the white paper and creates a dynamic relationship. In the most active area, the center panel, the active individual depicted as a small dark patch, directs the compositional sweeps back to the periphery of the drawing. The greatest surface intensity occurs in the area of greatest compositional activity, and one finds that this small area instantly becomes an important focal point, having a great deal of power. At the same time, the scale of the large figures outlined by a contour only contrasts to that of the small dark figures, producing a spacial relationship much like that between the cars and the figures from the previously discussed work, Two Space Regina Riot 1935, only now a direct relationship between the sizes of the figures on the three sheets of paper adds to the visual dynamics.

Jim Simpson, writing for the Edmonton Journal, has observed that these drawings "bear witness to some aspects of perception and memory that were revealed to Yates in his study of photography--film making in particuclar" and that they show his knowledge of "multiple image, sequence, and flashback."[21] This relationship is not surprising when we remember that Yates began his "focus" on space while looking through the lens of a movie camera. At the same time, Yates relies to a great extent on his memory in creating these images since they relate to his mental image retained from that moment, years ago, when he saw the Regina Riot in progress. This aspect adds to the film-like quality as his visual memory of the event consists of a view through the window of a car which would have cropped the action indiscrimin-

antly like a camera. Finally, Yates supplemented his own memory with black and white photographs of the actual riot for visual references. Thus, with the Regina Riot Series, Yates combines a personal memory, documented history and creative imagination to arrive at his final statement on paper. The documentary quality of the series is enhanced by the quality of the drawn lines, since Yates allows the process of applying the "mark on the surface" to remain on the paper.

Jim Simpson also remarks on the aspect of time captured by the drawing:

> The action spills over the separate sheets which make up the individual episodes; yet time is suspended, even arrested by the unerring disposition of the figures . . . These drawings record the incident of the riot itself. One panel, two panel, three panel; in stop-frame fashion they suggest the increasing power of a riot, and at the same time, through the masterful use of line and tone, the increasing alienation that the participants experience.[22]

The dramatic nature of the peace before the riot contrasting to a sudden surge of activity when the whistle sounds is evident. Simpson goes on to say that Yates' "explorations of the ambiguities of space and time serve as valuable contributions to our notions of identity."[23]

In this series, Yates portrays a mob as he had in the Allegoria Series, but this time the mob is victim of a larger power and in conflict with that power. One individual, however, stands out by action, color, and compositional importance in the central panel. In his careful fusion of form and content, Yates portrays this lonely individual as he strikes out against impossible odds.

With Portable Canadian Hero II (1972) (Plate 28), Yates increases the number of modules and depicts the now forgotten features of one of the jailed trekkers who was regarded somewhat as a martyr at the time of the riot. With small textured pencil strokes, on eighteen large pieces of paper, Yates has formed an enormous portrait that retains the intimate qualities of a sketch which overcomes the more formal rigor of the large size typical of historical paintings.[24] Many Canadian artists are familiar with the well-known painting by Robert Harris of The Fathers of Confederation, and its preliminary sketch with its overlaid grid. Here, in Portable Canadian Hero II, Yates seems to refer to the process of enlarging an academic painting to scale, creating an historical work dealing with a common man as a hero, in a direct informal way, without the more ceremonial and formal quality of an oil painting which is usually associated with an historical, academic portrait.

Not only does the drawing contain a suggestion of seriality because of the modular component, but the geometric horizontal and vertical grid between the sheets of paper lends a dynamism that would not otherwise exist since a striking contrast between the geometric grid and the organic face is created. In another way, the grid affects the composition of the total drawing because it changes depending on the texture and color of the wall upon which it is hung.

Yates was fascinated by the way some of the modules regarded out of context with the whole became abstractions:

> It became simply a matter of focus and yet a realization of the parts relating to the whole and the whole to the parts. Maybe that's how we all envision the whole world. It always comes to us partially by way of details that we

> put together in our memory, giving us a feeling of the whole. In that philosophical context, I made a direct physical contact between the surface of the paper and the notion that I was also manipulating a kind of limitless space even if it meant at this stage that I had to keep adding modules. It was quite important for me.[25]

The drawing has the quality of a "mug shot" and in fact was inspired by such a photograph of one of the trekkers who was arrested after the riot. The grid, therefore, seems to suggest jail bars which separate the viewer from the hero. By imprisoning this man, the more powerful authorities isolated him again as he was isolated in the Relief Camp that started the whole historical incident. In recreating the official "mug shot" of this wretched man, Yates portrays a hero with whom he can relate sympathetically, contrary to the hero that he satirized in the Throne Room Series. Yates has found a prairie hero in this common man.

The Regina Riot Series which was exhibited in "For an Independent Hairy Hill," fits in with the larger theme of Yates' "May This Land Survive" exhibition. The economic depression had a severe impact on the prairie economy which was largely based on agriculture during the 1930's. The effects of the world-wide economic depression were compounded by the severe drought conditions across the Prairies which devastated farm production for several years causing many farmers to lose their land to the "impersonal" eastern banks. Furthermore, the social tradition of the extended farming family was often disrupted as young men left the land to look for work elsewhere. In Margaret Atwood's discussion of Buffalo Jump, a play about the "On to Ottawa Trek", she sums up the theme as a "courageous struggle against over-

whelming odds, followed by defeat at the hands of an impersonal giant."[26]

Yates has been described as a "spokesman for the Prairie populists."[27] George Melnyk defines populist art as a stylistically diverse representational art form dealing with the subject of man's relationship to the land and exhibiting a social conscience.[28] By this definition, then, prairie populism refers to a theme that is communicated to the viewer in an easily understood way. More central to Yates' work during the early 1970's, however, is his exploration into creating a unique artistic expression of his personal perception of the space surrounding him, the space of the Prairie.

Chapter VII

TOWARD LANDSPACE

1972 - 1974

The great challenge for Alberta landscape painters has consisted of their attempt to discover a way to transform their perceptions of a new land into a meaningful artistic expression. At the same time, the imported European stylistic tradition stood in the way of the creation of an indigenous interpretation of Alberta by its painters. In Unnamed Country, Dick Harrison discusses the influence of culture on our reaction to the landscape. He argues that the first English speaking people in the West, including artisits, "looked out on the prairies with essentially 'Eastern' eyes. Their perceptions were so conditioned that in the most prosaic and literal sense, they could not see clearly what was around them."[1] So it would seem that before the problem of how to paint the Prairie comes the primary problem of how to perceive the Prairie.

To illustrate an artist's struggle to paint the West, we think of Illingworth Kerr, one of the first prairie painters to articulate his aim as an attempt to portray the great space of the West. Because he discovered that he could not successfully transform his Group of Seven style for the Prairies, he turned to an abstract style following the theory of Hans Hofmann. Although Kerr's experiments and teachings have smoothed the way for many younger painters, the older man believes that by using planes of color and a high view point, he has not achieved a satisfactory depiction of the spacious West.[2]

As we saw in Chapter VI, in the early 1970's, along with a general trend in art and literature by Canadians to consider their local roots worthy of artistic inspiration, Yates experienced a profound change in the style and subject of his art. Along with other Alberta painters, he attempted to disregard past traditions and to initiate in his work a fresh interpretation of his environment. This new art which is said to be rooted in the Alberta "soil," is actually part of the Alberta painter with his perceptual, psychological and cultural self rooted firmly in the Prairie.

While Yates' work during the early 1970's became increasingly personal due to his perceptual search, with an attendant search back to his own historical "roots" in the Prairie, another personal force exerted itself. In the important year, 1972, Yates acquired what he has come to call his Land Studio, a quarter section of land sixty miles west of Edmonton, "rich in the line, the texture, and the contours which comprise the Alberta landscape."[3] Yates now believes that his rediscovery of "the land" revitalized his career:

> I have a conviction that the history and development of the prairies is integral with a love for the land. We discard that love and we lose our soul. My drawings and paintings are based on the landscape and the people I find there.[4]

With his new close relationship to the land, Yates' perceptions of the world enter his work as never before. The recognized father of Phenomemology, Edmund Husserl analyzed what he termed, "the immediacy of perception." That is, when a person finds himself in a crisis, or simply a new situation or environment, he becomes acutely aware of his own personal perceptions and uses these perceptions to interpret the

world.[5] So, as Norman Yates began to paint the landscape of his new Land Studio, he attempted to relate his own personal perceptions to the artistic tenets with which he was so familiar.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, the famed phenomenologist who carried on some aspects of Husserl's work, believed that the perceived world gives us our first and truest sense of "the real":

> By these words, the "primacy of perception", we mean that the experience of perception is our presence at the moment when things, truths, values are constituted for us; that perception is a nascent logos; that it teaches us, outside all dogmatism, the true conditions of objectivity itself; that it summons us to the tasks of knowledge and action. It is not a question of reducing human knowledge to sensation, but of assisting at the birth of this knowledge, to make it as sensible as the sensible, to recover the consciousness of rationality.[6]

Furthermore, perception is defined by Merleau-Ponty as a sensory-motor behavior, through which the world is "constituted for man as the world of human consciousness prior to any explicit or reflexive thought about it."[7] As a result, the world, to Merleau-Ponty, is the "concrete, intersubjectively constituted life-world of immediate experience. It is a world of familiar, natural, and cultural objects, of other people, the world in which I act."[8] As the perceived world is the primary reality, then the ideal truth is found in perceived truth and finally the idea of truth itself is an ideal implied in perception.

This thesis does not mean to imply that Yates is imbued with the tenets of Phenomenology. However, a knowledge of this philosophy helps us gain an understanding of Yates, who as an artist is very aware of the importance of his perceptions of the world. He believes

that a "chief barrier to communication is simply a matter of language," while, according to the artist, "people, no matter where they are, relate to the same spacial context," or share common perceptions of the space surrounding their bodies.[9] He further explains his awareness of the space around him:

> That thing that I describe as a spacial relationship universally is certainly one I feel in everyday occurences with people or with objects. I didn't deal with that notion in earlier times. I was always looking symbolically through a window before. Now the relationships are much closer, in some ways more disturbing. But they are more energetic, certainly.[10]

Yates believes that as an artist, he is only able to "partially understand the visual phenomena and translate that through [himself] and manifest it in paintings and drawings."[11] However, along with Phenonemologists and artists of the Ontological and Epistemological Conceptual movements, Yates agrees that personal perceptions become universal by the virtue of the common fact that we all share our humaness.

Of course, we do not exist simply in the "real" world of perception. We also dwell in "the realms of the imaginary, of ideality, of language, culture and history."[12] There are many levels of experience, and the phenomenological theory recognizes in each its "own irreducible specificity, its own meaning and value structure."[3] Yates is also aware of the complexities of reality that start with perception:

> The reality of objective consciousness, I believe, must be regarded as only the 'outer skin' of reality, and that mainly through a non-intellectual imaginative capacity to experience with a truly rich grasp of oneself as a person

> in relation to other persons and to one's environment come about. In whatever I try to do, my attitude and feeling are shaped I think by my awareness of others, by my need to somehow reach them and by the need of my reactions to respond to them.[14]

In Chapter VII, it was pointed out that Jean Paul Lemieux's depiction of space inspired Yates, therefore, a closer examination of Lemieux's attitude toward visual perceptions might help us to understand better Yates' work. For both painters, a change in their environment reinvigorated their perceptions of the world around them and lead to a profound change in their art at a relatively mature age. Lemieux has explained that an uprooting trip to France, caused him to see Quebec with new eyes on his return home:

> After 1956, and a year spent in France, I no longer saw things the same way. A totally different vision had developed, a horizontal vision above all, one that I had never had a hint of before. I had never noticed until then just how horizontal our country is. I had to leave to be able to appreciate this fact. How true it is that you have to go elsewhere to discover yourself . . . [15]

In fact, Lemieux also returned to Canada with a knowledge of Phenomenology and Merleau-Ponty. With a 1956 painting titled The Road That Leads Nowhere, the painter pays homage to the famed philosopher and emerges with a new style:

> In his postscript to the book left unfinished by the death of its author, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Claude Lefort described the philosophical spirit of the celebrated phenomenologist this way: 'It is precisely because philosophy is, in his eyes, continual questioning, that it each time enjoins us to presuppose nothing, to neglect the acquired and to run the risk of opening a route that leads nowere.' . . . This 'route that leads nowhere' is the kind of peril that must often be faced by him who would travel beyond the boundaries of acquired knowledge. . . . Making progress means setting out on an uncertain journey, on a road that

> seems to cross the threshold to nowhere, to the land of discovery.16

In this painting, Lemieux interprets the landscape as a vast and spacious area. This new vision is explained by Lemieux simply. "I paint space as I perceive it and if I didn't, I'd be lying, it wouldn't be honest."17

Among the many common influences and attitudes shared by Yates and Lemieux is their fairly sudden sense of confidence in the value of painting their own world inspired by their own perceptions.18 That both receive their artistic inspiration from the spacious quality of the Canadian landscape is most interesting. Lemieux became aware of the spacious quality of his homeland while travelling by train shortly after his return to Canada, saying that he "was struck . . . by a strange spatial quality about the lanscape."19 On the other hand, Yates attributes his awareness of the spaciousness of Alberta, to his experiences on his Land Studio:

> My experience on the land gives me more of a notion of space, a vision of an expanse of country combined with a feeling of continuous and unbounded extension in every direction.20

One of the first drawings completed by Yates on his new Land Studio, is Sketch IV (1972) (Plate 29). The work is reminiscent of Durham Landscape in its tranquil, direct translation of the artist's perceptions of the countryside; but now the countryside portrayed is Yates' own Alberta. A descriptive quality with an insistence on simplicity allows the mark on the paper to have a play on the surface, as the small brush strokes of color, give this piece in acrylic the

quality of a drawing. Allowing large areas of white paper to remain untouched, the artist utilizes echoing curves in the composition to capture the quality of winter light, transforming the solidity of the snow into a light-filled spacious area. The sky, which is usally associated with the quality of light and spaciousness, is in this work balanced by a similar spaciousness of the snow-covered earth.

A more complex work, Two Space Quarter Section No. 20 (1973) (Plate 30), is characterized by a dynamic interplay of opposites typical of much contemporary art in the second half of the twentieth century and perhaps popularized in Alberta most effectively through the Emma Lake workshops.[21] An examination of Norman Yates' art reveals similar ideas; however, they did not come directly from a study of Hofmann's theory but from the avant-garde experiments of New York artists after World War II. In Alberta, many artists have grappled with these same artistic problems, because they have been important problems for modern art in general in the second half of the twentieth century.

In Two Space Quarter Section No. 20, one finds that Yates employs a strong vertical surface-creating division to contrast to the horizontality of the whole work. From the early modular drawings, he had become intrigued with the formal concern of contrasting the common dimensions of two separate pieces of paper with their other unequal dimension.

In this work, the realistic figures have been removed and have been transformed into verticals that appear on the edge of the canvas, reminiscent of Lemieux's figures. So now, along with the contrasting verticals and horizontals, Yates contrasts a fairly representational

rain cloud with the abstracted series of stripes. Here, nature is seen as organic and the human element as geometric or architectonic. Perceptually, one experiences the rain cloud as a pressure from the top down toward the bottom, which contrasts to the stripes at the right edge, conveying a concentric pressure through their inward curve. The three bands on the right are painted in three different tones and one perceives them, therefore, as occurring on different levels of surface depth. Their verticality also contrasts to the general horizontality of the rain cloud. The hard edges of the canvas and stripes contrast to the softeness of the cloud, highlighting the difference between the naturally occurring organic phenomena as opposed to man and his geometric stylization. This contrast is further enhanced by the artist's handling of the paint which he applied smoothly in the human section and in a painterly way in the organic section.

It appears that the organic section on the left of the composition reads as sky or perhaps a more spiritual, pure realm, and the more geometric section on the right represents the man-made element on the earth. In spite of this interrelationship of dynamic opposites, the same colors with subtle variations are used throughout the pictorial space giving an overpowering cohesion to the work.

With Three Space Quarter Section (1973) (Plate 31), Yates attempts to deal formally and thematically with space, time and the duration of his perceptions of the Alberta landscape. Henri Bergson, in his work, The Creative Mind, mentions the concept of duration as it applies to perception saying, "duration alone allows us to perceive as intensely as we do the moving originality of things."[22] In Three

Space Quarter Section, the inclusion of different seasons and times of day begins to form part of Yates' spacial explorations. The pattern of seriality from earlier works is carried on in a new cyclical manner. In this experimental work, he chooses to attempt to capture a particular day in Alberta when a "Sun Dog" is visible around the sun. He refers to that day when heavy with atmosphere, space seems to become tangible.

With great economy of means, the geometrical composition of horizontal and vertical striations includes a passive and an active area. The white toned passive area represents the winter landscape and is counterpointed with the active summer landscape, which suggests harvest through its golden color. Growth or spring is also suggested by the blue and yellow areas combined. Summer and winter are clearly divided to reinforce the abrupt and dramatic nature of the change of the seasons in Alberta. However, the cyclical nature of the year is also implied by the inclusion of all four seasons. The contrast between gesturally and smoothly applied paint as well as soft and hard edges reinforces the work. The artist is sensitive to the fusion of form and content in this work which is further reinforced by the inclusion of the sun and quarter moon showing the dialectic of day and night, ultimately referring to cyclical time, since the dynamism of both sun and moon appear and reappear to mankind in many ways.

With Two Space Quarter Section (1974) (Plate 32), Yates has combined formalist elements typical of modernist concerns with an attempt to portray the essence of the Alberta landscape. In order to translate his perceptions onto the pictorial surface, to flow visually through the surface, the painter combines an illusion of space with an

emphasis on surface handling. Many opposites are again utilized; horizontal and vertical areas, hard edges and soft edges, as well as dark and light color. In this light-filled painting, time becomes part of space or the universe, and its relative permanence contrasts with our limited time and space. Yates has removed the human figure from the canvas, and now the human element consists of the observer standing temporarily in front of the painting.

In the introduction to an exhibition of drawings and paintings held by Norman Yates, Raymond Ouellet speaks of the unique, developing prairie tradition, which Yates is maintaining and exploring, consisting of intense light, raw prairie color, and vast space.[23] Often in the previously discussed drawings and paintings completed between 1972 and 1974, an experimentation with these issues is central to Yates' art. The paintings are perceptual in their inspiration stemming from the Prairie and conceptual in the transformation of this prairie space onto the surface of the canvas. These works by Yates are firmly based on his exploration of the visual phenomena of the Land Studio and go beyond a mere description of the visual phenomena, as they reach out to encompass the perceptual phenomena of light, space and time experienced by mankind.

Thus, one finds that with these landscapes, Yates has carried on his idea initiated in the "Extensions" exhibition in 1969 where he explored the concept of expanding his work by leaving the "fixed and permanent" and moving toward a flexible non-permanent space as he constantly attempts to come to grips with his awareness of a continually changing image of reality. The painter discovered that simplification was a key to the dilemma:

> [A] distinctive feature of life in Alberta related to the nature of the land and its effects on the people is the consciousness of space. Volume, compression and corridor, seem to me to be characteristic of large city living, but in the West, people are still peculiarly aware of the openness of the sky and the spread of the land.[24]

Although, in the above words, Yates is discussing film, he could just as easily be referring to his own drawings and paintings. This awareness of space has caused Yates to become more conscious of time and detail. Because he is not bombarded with too much detail in a small space, he sees more and has the time to study what he sees carefully, to allow his perceptions to savor the image before him. Like Lemieux, who was struck by the illusive quality of the landscape on his return to Canada, Yates is aware of the illusive nature of prairie space. And like Lemieux, the Alberta painter also attempts to caputure this illusive quality that one can come close to, but never reach:

> The spacial interest is curious because it really has to do with something that isn't there and conceptually it's hard to make it solid. Philosophically, it's really energetic, a dynamic thing that we'd normally associate with either the impact of solids or the splitting of solids. We never associate it with what happens at a distance between solids, and that is psychologically hard to do until you realize that most of our lives, we're walking along roads, through corridors, between objects, . . . it becomes obvious that perhaps the spacial aspect is the more dynamic one.[25]

Chapter VIII

LANDSPACE

1975 - 1980

1975 marks an important turning point in Norman Yates' career, for it was in that year that he held his first Landspace exhibition.[1] Since then, in all of his exhibited work, this prairie painter has transformed his personal perceptions of the Alberta landscape, or landspace as he has come to call the particularily spacious land, into an original artistic statement. This body of work consists of mixed media drawings on paper, called Land Drawings, and paintings done in acrylic on canvas, the Landspace Paintings.

The Land Drawings are usually smaller works which Yates completes in one session out of doors. He works rapidly as he feels that he can "get to his vision quickly" in this way.[2] While manipulating the various media, usually charcoal, graphite, and acrylic, with which he is so familiar, he attempts to transfer his immediate perceptions of the environment onto the surface of the two-dimensional paper. Included in his immediate perception of a space, is what Yates believes to be a dynamic relationship between himself and the space he has entered. It is this relationship that he attempts to capture in his portrayal of the space surrounding his body in these rapidly executed drawings.

However, with the large Landspace Paintings, Yates attempts to "deal with the full spacial possibilities" of the land and the sky.[3] Along with the dynamic relationship between the artist and the

space which begins as he enters the landscape, he feels that, as he perceives a space and understands it, his own response to it changes. In a theoretical sense, that means that his perceptions of the space caused aspects of the actual space to seem to change.[4] Yates attempts, then, in the large paintings to capture more than the immediate nature of the relationship between the painter and the landspace. He also attempts to capture the relationship between himself and the space through time.

Furthermore, Yates explains that he attempts to depict what he calls a "more spherical relationship, a broader relationship:"[5]

> Another element for me is all of those forces that have occurred out of my control. I am aware of my perceptions of space and the space which affects my perceptions. But I have a feeling that surrounding me and constantly influencing me and itself constantly being influenced by my existence in it, there is in effect the space that is behind me. Both the time elements that have gone into the making of the existing space and the existence of the source of light that is itself constantly changing, forces an awareness on me that I am only part of the whole system rather than the central part. . . . It is this third broad series of events that go on all the time, that are effective on both my perceptions and space. . . .[6]

This third element mentioned by Yates, the space-time continuum in which all things exist, may be perceived while viewing a Landspace painting. The image tends to expand beyond the canvas in all directions, suggesting the space that exists beyond the painters perceptions. So, from a starting point of his perception of the space surrounding his body, Yates brings all of his experience and knowledge to bear in creating a work pertaining to Landspace, as he attempts to capture not only the essence of the Alberta Landscape, but the

relationship between man and the Prairie, and a universal image of space.

Yates simply differentiates these Landspace drawings and paintings by number, indicating the continuing, serial nature of his work as it develops over time. This practice also leads the viewer away from attempting to recognize specific geographic locations in the works or in giving the works an overtly symbolic interpretation but, instead, it guides the viewer to become perceptually engaged with the spacial aspects of the drawings and paintings.

In Two Space with Three Figures (1975) (Plate 33), Yates continues his ongoing interest of relating the human figure to its environment. Here, the artist attempts to relate the figures from the Survival Series to the prairie landscape of his Land Studio both structurally and symbolically.

In an attempt to depict his perceptions of the environment, Yates divides the landscape into horizontal color bands which appear on the paper as surface oriented areas. Thus, without descriptive detail, he attempts to translate his perception of the landscape into a surface energy across the pictorial space by the interaction between the blue and orange areas. The interaction is enhanced by the division between the two areas by means of a powerful white line. Further, this line tends to balance the white area containing the dark figures below. While the land and sky are full of surface texture and color, the lower white band containing the figures is isolated by the absence of color and by the realistic figures rendered in diminishing size.

In painting, the relationship of figures to landscape traditionally tells the viewer something about the artist's attitude toward man's place in the universe. Yates explains that by including recognizable shapes of people in his abstracts, he has found a way of portraying the close relationship between humans and the harsh environment they struggle to subdue. The figures are in the landscape, yet are separate from it and not part of that lanscape. At the same time, an artist's treatment of the human figure tells the viewer something about the artist's attitude toward humanity, including himself. Yates believes that the artist and figure relate immediately because their shared humaness creates a spacial tension between the two:

> In spite of my feeling that the figure was out of context, not fully related, the figure was still nevertheless a reflection of myself. I was the other person watching that figure in space, watching the figure as that figure was watching me. It's a kind of mirror, a sensitive mirror.[7]

The belief that the world is a "mirror" was also shared by Merleau-Ponty who explains this belief in his typically poetic language in the following excerpt:

> The enigma is that my body simultaneously sees and is seen. That which looks at all things can also look at itself and recognize, in what it sees, the "other side" of its power of looking. It sees itself seeing; it touches itself touching; it is visible and sensitive for itself.[8]

Like Lemieux's Self Portrait of 1974, in which the artist includes anomynous figures from previous paintings, Yates explores the meaning of his own humanity, and his relationship to others and to the land in Two Space with Three Figures.

With Landspace Two (1975) (Plate 34), Yates attempts to come to terms with what Illingworth Kerr calls a "domineering tyrant", the Prairie horizon.[9] An attempt to conquer this "tyrant" is, for Yates, a central struggle in the years between 1975 and 1980 as we shall see. On the open Prairie, where one can see clearly for far distances in all directions, the demarcation between land and sky forms a circle around the viewer, with the center of the circle at the spot where the viewer is standing. In Merleau-Ponty's words, ". . . my body is a thing among things; it is caught in the fabric of the world, . . . it holds things in a circle around itself."[10] The horizon that appears to the viewer as a line separating earth and sky does exist for all to see and so exists in each perceiver's mind. Plains Indians were aware of this phenomenon on the Prairie and it forms the basis of their central image, the Medicine Wheel:

> The Medicine Wheel Circle is the Universe. It is change, life, death, birth and learning. This great circle is the lodge of our bodies, our minds, and our hearts. It is the cycle of all things that exist. The circle is our way of Touching, and of experiencing Harmony with every other thing around us. And for those who seek understanding, the Circle is their Mirror. . . ."[11]

Yates is also aware of the horizon as a circle around his body. He and Wilfred Watson share an interest in spacial concepts and continue to exchange ideas on the subject. Yates related that Watson recently asked him this question:

> How do you feel about the horizon line surrounding you in fact and then at the appropriate point appearing on the page as a line, a continuation of the cycle?"[12]

Yates is also constantly aware that he cannot perceive the total horizon at one glance:

> The horizon exists in my mind beyond my simple perception. My awareness of it is that it actually goes beyond my perception. Even when I put a line on the paper, it is the equivalent of the horizon, but only part of it. I can only grasp a bit of it.[13]

The circle of the horizon is not static, but changes as the viewer's position changes. It is a phenomenological principle, that as one changes one's position on the earth, one creates a new space surrounding oneself as Merleau-Ponty explains:

> Immersed in the visible by his body, itself visible, the see-er does not appropriate what he sees; he merely approaches it by looking, he opens himself to the world. . . . I say of a thing that it is moved; but my body moves itself, it is not blind for itself, it radiates from a self. . . .[14]

Jean Paul Lemieux has also mentioned the importance of the moving horizon on his perceptions, saying, "When you walk, the horizon rocks back and forth to the left and right as you move along".[15] The horizon which exists because of the viewer's perceptions, seems to have movement and life of its own.

While Yates attempted to come to a creative interpretation of his experience in the space of the Prairie, a line on the canvas became the horizon, in his mind. When the artist moves around the canvas, flat on the ground of the Land Studio, he changes the line or adds lines to relate to his actual response to the new horizon that his movement has created.

With the experimental Landspace Two, Yates again breaks the landscape up into geometric color areas. Above a primary horizon line of varied thickness is a spacious, neutral, horizontally-oriented zone. Below this horizon is a contrasting active area consisting of orange and blue color areas which vaguely refer to land and sky. However, here color is used largely for its own sake, unsubordinated to description. For instance, in the central square plane, the blue-orange dynamic is most active as the blue splashes of color vibrate to the surface. The neutral color of the sky reappears in the land area to add cohesion to the work; a practice of uniting the various areas of canvas with color that Yates often employs in the Landspace works. In this way, the blue area below the primary horizon represents an illusion of space or sky and acts as a counterpoint to the grey in the upper band. The disposition of the warm yellow and orange tones acts in a similar manner to create an illusion of the spacious land. With more than one view point and several planes of color, Yates seems to attempt to make the perceptual phenomena compatible with formal visual forces on the surface of the canvas, a method which results in a very personal abstraction of the space.

With Landspace Six (1975) (Plate 35), another experimental work, Yates attempts to maintain the importance of the surface which he feels is a contemporary artistic tradition. While there is an illusion of space, the surface is maintained by the use of gesture, compositional movements, and color energies on the canvas. The thrust of a light-filled shape from the right opposes the light-filled area in the upper left which appears to recede back into space illusionistically. These two areas of comparable tone are perceived as

occurring on different planes because of the application of the paint. Over much of the canvas, small dabs of paint dance across the surface as an attempt by the painter to retain the surface energy. These dabs also act illusionistically because the viewer may perceive them as misty atmospheric elements moving through the space. Along with the importance of the "mark on the surface" is the counterpointing of color which adds to the dynamics of the work. While the formal elements are primary in this painting, the artist intends the opposite orange and blue colors to relate to earth and sky, themselves opposites. He also intends by the dramatic juxtaposition of opposite colors combined with light and dark areas to convey the dramatic quality of the Albertan seasons changing quickly from winter to summer, from cold to warm temperature.

The next painting to be considered, Landspace Sixteen (1975) (Plate 36), is a horizontally-oriented work of great scale. While Yates painted at one end of the canvas, he could hardly see the other end and so he was forced to attempt to maintain the whole concept in his mind. However, as the surface changed through the process of creation, the painter found that he constantly changed his concept as he worked.

In this painting, Yates directly attacks that "domineering tyrant" the horizon--the relationship between reality and illusion--by joining three separate canvases. Here, the literal divisions become horizons for Yates. Conceptually, this was an important test for the painter, to leave the physical divisions as they are and yet suggest that one is to perceive them pictorially as horizons. He felt that if he could accomplish this feat, a dynamic relationship between the

literal separations of the canvases and the illusion of what the divisions visually suggest could add energy and life to the painting. So, the relationship between reality and illusion, Yates' long time interest, is clearly evident in the Landspace Paintings.

This large acrylic painting, Landspace Sixteen, consists of a series of applications of hues made by keeping the canvas soaking wet during the process of creation. The arcs of light consist of layers of thin glazes. As we have seen, Lemieux' work interests Yates and here he "uses corresponding elements of paint in concentration in one area and then allows the color to soften and flow into space" in another area in much the same way as is found in the work by the Quebec painter.[16] With an overall unifying quality of smoothly handled paint, Yates attempts, by means of color, to create two spacial areas surrounding the centre of the canvas. The orange used in these spacial areas relates to the central orange band, while the light arcs surrounding the centre relate to the light tones in the band, unifying the work through these color correspondences. The light arcs are also meant to be perceived as suggestions of movement so that the spacial areas, perceived as either land or sky, may appear to rotate around the fixed centre representing the land.

Barely discernable in the center of the painting are two shadowy figures which are part of Yates' ongoing interest in exploring the relationship between man and his environment. As Laurence Ricou asserts in his study of prairie literature, Vertical Man/Horizontal World, "the landscape, and man's relation to it, is the concrete situation with which the prairie artist initiates his re-creation of the human experience."[17] Yates who has been interested in humanity

throughout his career, likewise attempts to explore in his work man's relationship to the space he occupies. These figures in Landspace Sixteen, were drawn in pencil directly on the raw canvas before any paint was applied. Through the physical process of applying the paint, the figures became more and more submerged. In this way, Yates hoped to retain the figures in the landscape as part of the space and yet isolate them from that space with color. However, color and light force the submerged figures to the surface, creating a tension within the work which several critics have found vaguely disconcerting.[18] These figures appear small and insignificant, as is usually the case when Yates includes figures in a Landspace painting. The painter discusses this aspect of the figures and reveals his basic belief in the superior strength of nature:

> The small people have a slightly helpless quality that accounts for the scale of the figures and their slightly isolated, lost-looking quality. They're always standing there wondering what to do. Nature always knows what to do, but mankind is not that fortunate. . . . The inclusion of the figure is much more visually inclined to what's actually happening in the landscape. When I look at my own drawings, the figures take on more symbolic significance as figures of loneliness or conflict or the grouping of them for protection. Then that cycle affects the next set of drawings or paintings; but it really started as a visual occurrence.[19]

With Landspace Seventeen (1976) (Plate 37), Yates again creates a painting with three separate canvases in order to render his perceptions of the dynamics of open space. The overall horizontality of the work is reinforced by the divisions between the canvases. The relationship between the different canvases creates illusions of horizons, in much the same way as does the relationship between the

earth and sky in the actual landscape. While Yates became more familiar with the Land Studio in winter, he began to perceive the snow covered land, reflecting the light filled color of the sky, as a vast spacial area, much like the sky. Thus, he began to equate the two areas in his canvases, evoking the space of the prairie landscape in winter through the neutrality of the color. Therefore, in Landspace Seventeen, the two horizons separate three areas that can all be perceived equally as land or sky. The central, most energetic panel separates the two more passive panels which act as counterpoints to that middle band. Similar tones are used in all three bands and are quite undefined, so that any definition that occurs to the viewer happens because the three bands are interacting. In the center panel, rhythmical movements ripple across the surface suggesting windswept snow or sky as well as, in a more symbolic sense, the rhythmical cycle of all that has life. These horizontal bands depicting the timeless winter landspace suggest a continuous expansion in all directions. Yates has always been interested in painting a subject that has life, and particularly in the cyclical nature of living things, an idea which he now expands to encompass infinity.[20]

In Lemieux' work, horizontality often represents melancholy, but to Yates, the spacious horizontal Prairie is an image of freedom:

> I have almost a recurring vision, partially a dream of sitting on the Prairie. I did that mostly as a child as I lived on the outskirts of town and in five minutes I could be on the open Prairie. I can remember and feel strongly about the openness of the Prairie, never being enclosed.[21]

The subject of this painting is still man's relationship to the surrounding world, even though the figure is excluded from the

composition. We the viewer, like the artist, feel small, yet physically free, as we stand in front of this representation of a vast expanding space.

In 1976, Yates again attempted to relate figures to the land-space in Two Space Land Drawing No. 3 (Plate 38). This drawing clearly evolves from earlier drawings like Two Space with Three Figures which was previously discussed. Again, a modular structure is related to the actual material which Yates used in the fixed format of the size of the paper as it was bought. Formally, the center of the paper is the most energetic area because a surface-making division contrasts to the empty, white paper or space. The dark figures are set in scale relationships to place them in the fore-ground and the mid-ground. Their blackness causes them to act pictorially in much the same way as the small figures from the Regina Riot series, as if they are attached right on the surface because of the intensity of the black, or as holes in the paper, again because of that striking black color. In addition to the dynamics of the figures, the color or land bands and the white space bands extend laterally in either direction, setting up another dynamic relationship. Shifting horizons are again used as secondary compositional forces. The texture and color of the vertical acrylic strokes relate to the active vertical division in the center. At the same time, their verticality opposes the large areas of white paper or horizontal space expanding laterally to either side. The concept of time is not obvious, yet the colors orange and blue combine or contrast with each other, indicating summer. They further contrast with the white paper that can be perceived as snow as well as space.

Yates made the strong vertical division in order to see how it would affect the overall horizontal flow of space in this work which, taken in total, is horizontally-oriented. At the same time, the strong vertical division implies the relationship between a vertical man and the horizontal Prairie which is here explored in formal and symbolic terms.[22] These figures are the same ordinary heroes of the Regina Riot drawings. They are the painter himself, and all prairie people through history. The painterly forces relate to the center vertical line that Yates further equates with the presence of the viewer. The viewer places himself in front of this division and perceives the forms moving out in either lateral direction. In this way, Yates attempts to influence the viewer's space and his movements. This aspect of locating the viewer in the centre, relates to the phenomenological principle, discussed earlier, of the figure at the center of his world, perceiving space expanding out equally in all directions from his body.[23] In these Landspace works, the placement of the figure in the center of the canvas, or the division of the pictorial space in the center either in a horizontal or a vertical manner, always relates to mankind, including the artist and the viewer.

Landspace Twenty (1976) (Plate 39), has a physical division in the exact center across the canvas. Since the dimensions are equal, the painting comes alive because of the differences between the sections and the contrasts within each section. While Yates became more familiar with his Land Studio, he began equating space with light, believing that the greater the amount of raw prairie light, the more spacious the landspace appears to become as sometimes the sky, and sometimes the earth, is alive with light. In the upper half of

the canvas, an area composed of surface-oriented, gestural painting on the left is contrasted to a spacious light-filled area on the right. The lower section containing a light band comes alive through the subtle variations of a darker blue.[24] Barely discernable, two ghostly figures approach the light-filled area in the upper portion. Here, mood is controlled by the use of tone and light. The viewer feels that the figures are attempting to move toward the light, a strong force in a prairie person's sense of place.

With Landspace Twenty-One (1976) (Plate 40), Yates again attempts to portray space through a neutral use of tone, on this large horizontal canvas. However, here, as in past paintings, like Wall Painting I, a bright concentration of red color assumes great power within a larger area of subdued tone. The strong red sun appears to come forward toward the viewer, creating a sense of space behind itself. The sun seems to float before our eyes and, at the same time, it also seems to be attached to the surface like a seal or medal. As one stares at the canvas, ones eyes are constantly drawn to the sun which seems to become active and begins to vibrate.

In Chapter II it was mentioned that Yates learned to reduce the scene to be painted to basic geometric shapes while he was an art student. We have also seen that he is attracted to the work of those painters, like Victor Pasmore or Josef Albers, who portray the geometric basis of nature. This artistic value that has always been evident in Yates' own work is well suited to the portrayal of the space of the Prairie. Horizontal, vertical, and circular shapes made even more apparent because of the simple, uncluttered appearance of the Prairie are the dominant shapes to be perceived. This visual

simplicity, coupled with the use of symmetry and balance, is often evident in the Landspace series of works.

In Landspace Twenty-One, the large domineering sun with its visual force increases in power when the viewer becomes aware of its symbolism. Here, Yates again attempts to come to grips with the concept of power, relating formal visual elements and symbolism; this time it is the power of the physical world. Although one creates an image of the world through one's perceptions, the forces of nature are still more powerful than man. The small, timid figures are humbled by the sun, the life giving power symbol of nature. Thus, one finds that in this painting, the circular and horizontal overwhelm the small human vertical shapes.

Landspace Twenty-Three (1976) (Plate 41), is an example of visual forces at work in a painting creating spacial illusions and dynamic surfaces. Inspired by the Prairie, Yates attempts in this painting to create a dynamic, non-objective space. The three color areas are separated by parallel lines, but their color relationships make the middle band appear to be expanding. Yates is aware of the reflective, seemingly light creating property of aluminum foil, and similarly, he attempts to create a light-filled area, now using silver colored paint in the narrow central band. The two areas above and below the silver band both contain different shades of the same color, providing unity to the whole work. Again, a small area becomes a visually powerful focal point on the canvas.

The only symbolic interpretation intended in this work is the possibility of equating the white and blue areas not only with space but also with the sky or a more spiritual realm.

Landspace Thirty-One (Plate 42), painted toward the end of 1976, illustrates the artist's ability to express the spaciousness of the land by means of tone. With large horizontal areas, he composes a simplified abstraction of land and sky. Two horizontal bands above the sharply drawn horizon contrast to three more vertically oriented areas in the lower portion. The fairly uniform treatment of the sky explores space through surface tone, while the varied light within the large band below the horizon seems to suggest the vast space of the Prairie stretching back to the horizon.

The more Yates became imbued with the Alberta landscape, the more he became aware of the light-reflective qualities of snow. He began to believe that it is the snow that partly gives a prairie dweller his sense of place and affects one's perception of space while living in Alberta. Yates also attempts to capture the great contrasts that can appear in the winter landscape when a dark area comes directly into contact with a brightly lit area. He feels that often these dark, light contrasts in the winter landscape of the Prairie add to one's visual sense of place.

Landspace Thirty-Nine (1979) (Plate 43), is a painting which Yates completed between two series of works and can be seen as an introduction to his most recent work. Here, with an illusion of a storm cloud on the horizon, Yates allows expression and distortion of his actual visual perceptions to occur. The cycle between illusion, expression, and abstraction has been a constantly recurring characteristic of his work throughout his career and continues into the present time. In spite of the fact that this work introduces a return to a greater interest in "expression", the painter continues to match

theory to the manifestation of the surface.

In Landspace Thirty-Nine one can recognize the initiation of a more subdued palette, combined with the appearance of an overall uniform texture which at times seems to transform the pictorial surface into the tactile qualities of a finely woven tapestry. The artist recognizes that seeing his wife, weaver Whynona Yates, create her works has given him a greater appreciation for the texture, surface, color, and scale of woven fabric which he feels has influenced his ideas on these aspects of his own work.[25]

Structurally, the dark blurred shape at the right appears to press forward toward the surface. The sharply drawn line receeding from the lower left corner of the canvas to the horizon at the right suggests a road diminishing into the distance. The perspective illusion of the road forces one to perceive this ominous dark object in the distant prairie space. The artist comes to this solution by utilizing his memory, which is evident when he states, "the exaggerated sky formations occur but never to this intensity, except perhaps in our memory."[26] The use of his memory of his sensate experiences of the Prairie in addition to painting the scene "on the spot" is further evident in his own words:

> Everytime I make one of these paintings it's certainly related to my past experiences in the country. I always have a tremendous sense of déjà vu, a new cycling of a vision that I'd had before--especially in spacial terms. . . . In Saskatchewan we used to get that 'build up' on the horizon. It's a slightly ominous feeling that prairie people live with.[27]

The cloud ominously presses into the viewer's space and if the viewer has had personal experiences with the Prairie, it re-awakens his

memories and perceptions of that landscape. Yates manipulates the pictorial space in this precise manner in order to stimulate not only the viewer's immediate perception of the work of art, but also his memory as he recalls his own personal associations with the space of the Prairie.

Yates continued to produce drawings in this latest series. Land Drawing No. 13 (1980) (Plate 44), suggests an oriental feeling that Yates' work sometimes evokes. While in Japan, in 1979, he was impressed with the handling of space by past and present Japanese painters. He feels that the contemporary Japanese artists he met were attempting to combine space and surface in their works. Their answer to the dilemma was to compose works exphasizing compositional movements in a two-dimensional direction, extending vertically or horizontally as Yates had also done. He sensed that contemporary Japanese painters were struggling to get some illusion of space in a western sense while retaining their traditional surface while he, Yates, was struggling in the opposite direction.

In this drawing, Land Drawing No. 13, Yates attempts to achieve an overall spacious illusion using light/dark contrasts so typical of the prairie winter landscape with its stark beauty of leafless trees and snow. The large dark form on the left contrasts to the samll horizontal shape on the right, enhancing the suggestion of space. The individual strokes add to the illusion evoking an atmospheric winter-scape.

Another drawing from 1980, Land Drawing No. 27 (Plate 45), is a rapidly done chalk drawing of the artist's direct perception of the Land Studio. The square piece of paper is divided into color areas by

horizontal and vertical illusionary divisions. The vertical division relates to the surface, while its light-filled quality implies space. The dark tree forms are attached to the bottom edge of the paper which has the effect of seeming to pull the dark forms to the surface. The mark-making is intended for surface orientation, giving an overall tactile, tapestry-like quality that suggests at once surface and space.

Yates enjoys doing these rapid perceptual drawings. He feels that as he continues to perceive the prairie landscape, he approaches a deeper understanding of that space. He is totally familiar with the media, the paper, the formal theory, the process of drawing, and the landspace, to such an extent that he is somewhat like a Japanese bamboo painter who with each rendition attempts to share with the viewer his increasing knowledge of all the elements involved in the subject.

The latest Landspace series ends with Landspace 50 (1980) (Plate 46). With this large work, Yates attempts to retain the structural notion that the division between the canvases equals the perceived horizons. Further, he wants to combine this concept with illusionary horizons painted onto the surface. The horizon to which the viewer relates as a symbolical damarcation between land and sky is also intended by the painter. Along with these ideas, he attempts to provide the viewer with a vision of the Prairie in front of which the viewer will remember his personal perceptual experiences of the region. In this work, many horizons separate areas of color; at times, light and dark color areas interact directly while at other times, the artist uses a gradual shift in color as well as in light. In using these visual forces, the painter attempts to portray the

essence of the Prairie through time including multiple cycles of time and space.

In the following passage, Yates sums up his current perceptions of the lanspace which he has studied for so long:

> When I'm in the landscape, I have always a strong awareness of all the elements going on . . . of the inevitability of that process which is something I enjoy. Because unlike that vertical figure on the horizontal world from my paintings, I feel much more a part of it and I'm not so anxious about being isolated from it because I know that one day, I too will become horizontal and simply a part of the universal fact. So it's a slightly more humble position, but equally a more realistic one in some ways. It's not so tight a relationship. It permits an expansion of perception yet a very close one to one intimacy with the process of nature.[28]

Chapter IX

CONCLUSION

When reviewing the work of the Alberta landscape painter, Norman Yates, one is struck by the dramatic change that occurred in his art in 1972. Throughout his career, he has constantly searched for an artistic expression that would have strength in the honesty of its origin in his personal convictions about life and art. Most importantly, he has always wished to communicate to his fellow humans in a meaningful way. From his early realistic figurative paintings which involved some distortion for compositional and expressive purposes, the artist has continually explored the relationship between the human figure, representing all humanity, and its environment by utilizing varying degress of abstraction and sybolism expressed in different media. These explorations reached their peak in the years between 1970 and 1972 when Yates devoted himself to experiments with various electronic media to the total exclusion of drawing and painting. Although these activities were interesting and exciting, he never felt that he had found the means to truly express his artistic and personal concepts during the 1950's and the 1960's. Finally, however, in 1972, Yates combined a medium, style and subject which brought about the consolidation of his artistic endeavors and his emergence as an important Alberta landscape painter.

Integral with Yates' maturity as an artist was his return to what he calls the tradition and purity of drawing and painting. Working within this artistic tradition which stems from his personal

roots--his childhood interests and his formal training--he now feels most comfortable. Yates continues his concern of relating the spacial qualities which he perceives in the physical world to the humans who inhabit that space, but now restricts himself to transforming these visual perceptions onto the two dimensional paper or canvas. At the same time, the environment that he attempts to portray is his own home, the western Prairie.

This important aspect in Yates' work coincided with a general trend involving several Alberta artists and writers during the early 1970's to believe in the validity of an artistic expression inspired by their own perceptions of their local roots. Yates' own emergence as an Alberta landscape painter was influenced considerably by his participation in the "For an Independent Hairy Hill" exhibition, his relationship with the Alberta literary circle associated with the White Pelican magazine, and especially his friendship with Wilfred Watson.

With renewed energy and conviction, Yates made great advances in 1972 with his early attempts to portray the Prairie. In Four Space Elevator With Brand and the Regina Riot Series, he combined his past and present visual perceptions of the space of the Prairie, with western history. In these attempts to depict the vast space of the West, the artist divided the perceived space in various ways and used silhouette drawing, leaving large areas of white paper untouched.

Possibly the greatest influence on Yates' emergence as a prairie landscape painter of originality and strength occurred in 1972 with the beginning of his direct and continual relationship with his Land Studio. It was his visual perception of this land near Edmonton that

led Yates to think of his surroundings as landspace. He discusses the importance of the great sense of space one receives on the vast, boundless prairie as a "vision" leading to a "feeling" he has about the Prairie in the following quotation:

> My experience on the land gives me . . . a notion of space, that is a vision of an expanse of country combined with a feeling of continuous and unbounded extension in every direction--landspace.[1]

The resulting Quarter Section Series of 1972 which was executed with great simplicity on Yates' new Land Studio, clearly places the artist in the western Canadian tradition of landscape painters who attempt to translate their visual perceptions of the vast space, made apparent by the flat expanse of land, bright light, and prairie color, into a visual art. Since this new impetus in his career, Yates' mature work, consisting of the Land Drawings and Landspace Paintings carried out between 1975 and the present, exhibit consistency in style and content. These drawings and paintings reflect the painter's awareness of aspects of modern art of the second half of the twentieth century originating in the post-war New York School and now so pervasive throughout the world. This series also reflects his previous explorations into spacial concepts using various media such as stage design, holography, photography, and film making. So, contrary to the "searching years" prior to 1972, one finds that Yates has been able to consolidate all of his artistic and personal beliefs into his personal image in the Landspace Series.

A closer analysis of the formal characteristics of the artist's Landspace drawings and paintings indicates the fusion of the formal

concerns with which he had long been working and his visual perceptions of the space of the Prairie. An overall stability within the pictorial space is often maintained through the use of a classically balanced composition based on opposing horizontal, vertical, or circular movements of force. The size and shape of the paper or canvas is always carefully chosen to add to the compositional dynamics of the total work. At times, he extends the composition over two or more canvases which are related in a vertical or horizontal format, often extending the repetitive, serial manipulation of these compositional characteristics with each brush stroke. This overall stability so evident in the mature drawings and paintings leads the viewer to perceive the timeless stability of the prairie space as it flows into infinity, extending by suggestion beyond the confines of the paper or canvas.

The interrelationship of opposing forces, so characteristic of modern art, can also be found throughout Yates' oeuvre in the use of color stemming directly from the theories of Josef Albers and the use of visual contrasts rooted in the theories of Hans Hofmann. Likewise, the importance of variety in the handling of the paint has always intrigued Yates. This use of relating, or of conversely juxtaposing, various formal aspects of a drawing or painting to set up dynamic relationships is always fused with the subject matter or theme of the work. From an early notion of a simple contrast of painterly qualities to reinforce his theme, as seen in the early school works like The Gate, his use of opposites evolved slowly, until the 1970's when a more mature dialectical expression of the complex relationship between opposites was achieved.

Furthermore, close attention to the process of creating a work of art, coupled with the explorations into various media has ultimately added richness to Yates' work. The use of several modules created separately and brought together forming one total image, or a large horizontal pictorial space which cannot be taken in at a single glance by the painter as he works, add to the importance which Yates places on time, experimentation, and process expressed in form and content. By concentrating on the process of the act of creation in this way, he attempts to integrate the space and time dynamics of this process so that they become part of the spacial dynamics of the work of art.

These structural and stylistic characteristics of Yates' drawings and paintings, exhibiting the use of dynamic opposites, have always been inspired by the artisit's perceptions of natural phenomena. In Yates' mature work, the use of these relationships to compose a painting now stems from his perceptions of the prairie space in particular and had lead him away from arriving at a composition based on the interrelationships between tangible objects. Now, he instead attempts to capture the dynamics of an intangible, flexible space determined by his own visual perceptions of that space. Attempting to capture this illusive space of the Prairie can only be achieved after a sensitive visual relationship with the land and the sky is established. Yates' perception of the horizon is always the basic component of the work. All of the other sensitive markings on the surface are the result of the translation of his visual perceptions of the intense light as it bathes the landscape. Conversely, the shadows cast on the land, or the absence of direct light and all

of the subtle differences in between, also form the work of art. Yates' belief that it is the light that defines the spaciousness of the Prairie, coupled with his belief that it is the sense one perceives of a vast spaciousness, which, in turn, defines the Prairie itself, form the basis of his renditions of the landspace.

Another essential ingredient to the composition of the Landspace works is Yates' insistence on the value of what he calls "the mark on the surface" unsubordinated to description. The importance that he places on the artist's "touch" has remained a constant concern through the years. He believes that it is the human "touch" that is the most important aspect of a drawing or a painting and gives the work its quality. He further believes that it is this touch by the human artist evident in the least mark on the surface that ultimately gives the work of art its power to communicate with the viewer. This belief is further supported by Yates' concept that the maintenance of the "sense of surface" of the pictorial space is an important contemporary tradition that he wishes to explore. Finally, an attempt by Yates to create an art not only of visual interest, but also of tactile, emotional and intellectual interest, engaging not only the viewer's eye, but also his sense of touch, his emotions, and his mind gives the viewer more of an awareness of the sense of the three dimensional space of the Prairie on the paper or canvas.

It has been noted previously that Yates admires the work of the Quebec painter, Jean-Paul Lemieux, particularly his portrayal of vast space. Lemieux' unique depiction of space came from his reinvigorated visual perceptions of the Canadian landscape after an introduction to the theories of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Yates' portrayal of space, on

the other hand, has been influenced by Lemieux' work, coupled with an intuitive analysis of prairie space which also seems to be phenomenological in origin. Standing alone in the prairie landscape, Yates uses his visual perceptions of the space surrounding his body to explore his relationship with the Prairie. As time passes, he enters into an evermore intimate relationship with his surroundings and combining his past and present perceptual experiences, he translates these perceptions onto the paper or canvas. Simple geometric forms, already found in Yates' early work, are now a predominant element in his compositions. The horizontal line or division representing the convergence of the flat Prairie and the large expanse of sky establishes the basis of the composition. This "line", reflecting the artist's perception of the Prairie, defines the work formally and thematically as a landspace, stretching out equally in all directions from the perceiver. At the same time, vertical lines, divisions, or actual figures represent the artist and thus all of humanity, because Yates believes that we all share our visual relationship to the space surrounding our bodies.

Structurally and thematically, then, Yates' long standing interest in his fellow man has lead him to an exploration of the relationship between the human figure and its environment and the translation of that relationship on to the pictorial space. His study has explored the relationship between reality and illusion. This attempt at discerning the real from the unreal has led Yates in his maturity, to an exploration of the dynamic relationship between himself and the surrounding world. He, thus, translates his visual perceptions of the Prairies with which he feels such a close relation-

ship and deep sense of belonging, on to the pictorial space. In the words of George Melnyk, "Man and the land are the two poles of Norman Yates' art. His creative space is the tenuous balance between man and the land."[2]

Related to the artist's perceptions of his surroundings, extending to include humanity, is Yates' concern with the relationship between the viewer standing in his space and the pictorial space culminating in an attempt to lead the viewer to enter into a dynamic perceptual relationship with the drawing or painting. In the early landspace works, figures are included by the artist to represent all humanity, including the artist and observer. When the viewer in his space perceives the figures in the pictorial space, it is hoped by the artist that the viewer will relate to the figures as if he is seeing himself in a sensitive mirror. However, in the late works, the figure is absent from the pictorial space. That figure has become fused with the artisit/observer. In Merleau-Ponty's terminology, the "phenonemological I" has fused with the "You" transforming into "We". George Melnyk again sensitively interprets Yates' work with the following words:

> These paintings announce both a personal and a collective identity. As a statement by an individual artist, they are striking. As an expression of Western Canadian sensibility, they are significant.[3]

With great harmony between style and content, Yates' translation of his personal perceptions of the prairie landscape reaches out to the viewer in his space, leading the viewer into a more sensitive awareness of his relationship to the surrounding world.

Finally, Yates' long time commitment to art is based on his firm belief in the importance of art to society; "as art becomes integral with life, so life is suffocated without art."[4] The artist feels a need to serve society with his art and sums up his feelings about the role of the artist and art in the following passage:

> An artist's visual perception is a tiny touch of understanding that comes about in the manner of a contribution to a whole set of understandings. If artists are totally involved, to whatever degree of sophistication, they contribute to a little bit of our understanding. When that is added to the total understanding, it can be very significant . . . . Most artists I have liked are part of the understanding of the whole. If you can just offer [a contribution to society] before it's too late . . . . That's philosophically my feeling about art. The true motivation for an artist has to be a contribution.[5]

With the expression of his personal perceptions of his environment, Yates hopes to communicate through his art that particular sense of space, light, and color so typical of the Prairie. As is often the case in the mature work of one who has achieved an important artistic expression, Yates' Landspace Series is marked by simplicity and assurance. The complex ideas about art and life and the world in which he dwells have been fused onto the pictorial surface with strength and clarity. In this way, Yates hopes that his art will aid others to understand their own relationship with the land, their fellow humans, and ultimately, with life in a more meaningful manner.

NOTES

NOTES

Chapter I

[1] Personal interview with Norman Yates, 7 November 1980. To illustrate a typical example which shows a teacher's general lack of understanding of children's art, Yates related an incident when his teacher loudly misinterpreted a drawing. The artist clearly remembers the embarrassment and discouragement associated with the event.

[2] Personal interview with Norman Yates, 7 November 1980.

[3] A common theme in prairie literature is the relationship between man and the cruel physical world. See Lawrence Ricou, Vertical Man/Horizontal World. Man and Landscape in Canadian Prairie Fiction (University of British Columbia Press, 1973).

[4] Personal interview with Norman Yates, 7 November 1980. In 1946, Yates co-illustrated a C.C.F. party publication. See Frank G. Hanson, March of Freedom (Regina: Service Printing Co. Ltd., 1946).

[5] Norman Yates, "Filmwest in the West," Arts Canada, 29, No. 169/170/171 (early Autumn, 1972), 90.

[6] Personal interview with Norman Yates, 7 November 1980.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

[9] It was almost impossible to get Veteran's Assistance to study outside Canada unless one could prove that the foreign institution offered something unique.

Chapter II

[1] See J. Russell Harper, Painting in Canada: A History (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1966), p. 345, and Dennis Reid, A Concise History of Canadian Painting (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 238.

[2] Back in the 1920's, with such painters on staff at O.C.A. as J. E. H. MacDonald, Fred Varley, and Arthur Lismer, the school had an understandable Group of Seven bias. This tradition continued into the late 1940's as five of Yates' eight instructors were themselves O.C.A. graduates. They were John Alfsen, Fred Hagen, Harley Parker, George Pepper, and Carl Schaefer. Some of Yates' teachers were also Canadian Group of Painters members (Schaefer and Jock MacDonald) or showed with that group (Hagen and Will Ogilvy).

3 Paul Duval, Canadian Drawings and Prints (Toronto: Burns and MacEachern, 1952), p. 9. In the United States, the depression and the W.P.A. projects sparked a similar interest in the urban scene.

4 Eric Friefield, Ogilvy, Parker, Pepper and Schaefer.

5 Alfsen, Friefield, Hagen, and Ogilvy.

6 Personal interview with Norman Yates, 7 November 1980.

7 Josef Albers, Interaction of Color (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1975), p. 1.

8 Personal interview with Norman Yates, 7 November, 1980.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid. The college was crowded with returning servicemen in addition to the usual younger students.

13 Ibid. Personal interview with Norman Yates, 7 November 1980.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16 M. Gray, M. Rand, L. Stein, Carl Schaefer (Toronto: Gage Publishing, 1977), pp. 35-36.

17 Personal interview with Norman Yates, 7 November 1980.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid. Yates returned to England partly because his wife wanted to visit her family.

21 Personal interview with Norman Yates, 7 November, 1980.

22 Ibid. Yates does not recall the title of the painting.

23 Ibid.

24 Yates recounted that the "Young Contemporaries" exhibitions were started by a similar group of young artists who felt stifled by the established galleries. Yates exhibited in the first show in 1950 which was then called the "O'Keefe's Art Awards."

[25] Hugh Thomson, "Tandem Bike Artist Exhibits at Beaches," Toronto Daily Star, 11 November 1952, p. 7.

Chapter III

[1] Personal interview with Norman Yates, 7 November 1980.

[2] Helen Melnyk, "The Abstract and Realistic Meet in Norman Yates' Work," Edmonton Journal, 25 February, 1978, p. C3.

[3] See Eric Newton, "Canadian Art in Perspective," Canadian Art, 11, No. 3 (Spring, 1954), 93-95.

[4] Personal communication with J. A. Forbes and Helen Collinson.

[5] Personal interview with Norman Yates, 7 November 1980.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Unknown, "Artists Told to Express Emotions," Edmonton Journal, 11 February 1961, p. 26.

[8] The style of this painting as well as Figures and Landscape I is somewhat reminiscent of paintings by J. B. Taylor, particularly in the surface orientation of the strokes. This is probably a parallel development in the work of both painters.

[9] Wilfred Watson is a play-wright and poet who taught at the University of Alberta for many years. During the time that Yates and Watson worked together, they shared an interest in the theories of Marshall McLuhan. Yates and Watson continue to exchange ideas about their work and share an interest in spacial concepts.

[10] This symbolic play has an anti-war content. The theme of peace is a long time interest to Yates who sees the "absurdity of war" intellectually. This idea is combined with his personal experience of World War II and the fact that he lost his brother in that war.

[11] Yates recalls that he chose the subject of the nude because he was teaching "life" classes and so had access to the model. In regard to the rather traditional approach evident in the figure, one should remember that abstract Expressionism was just reaching Toronto when Yates graduated from O.C.A. In the 1950's and early 1960's, there was not much "feed-back" or encouragement in Edmonton for an artist who experimented in abstraction, and so perhaps for this reason, Yates' attempts at abstract expressionism often seem tentative.

[12] Yates may have also been attracted to England because he had many emotional ties with that country. His parents and wife came from England. Yates was impressed with what he calls the liberal attitude of the English who gave him a job when he lived there in the

early 1950's. He was in England while Clement Greenberg made his well known tour of Canada.

13 Perhaps this painting was inspired by Pasmore's interest in workers' housing.

14 Durham Landscape is somewhat reminiscent of the work of Carl Schaefer, particularly in the use of tone, the composition, and treatment of the sky.

15 Yates believes that Manet humanized the academic nude with his depiction of that subject.

16 Yates became the Director of the Fine Arts Gallery on the University of Alberta campus in 1964, a position he held until 1967.

Chapter IV

1 Jim Salt reviewed these drawings commenting on the "mob". See Jim Salt, "Some Notes on the Visual Art of Norman Yates," Canadian Art, 23, No. 103 (October, 1966), 46-47 and "Norman Yates and Symbolic Violence," Edge, No. 9 (Summer, 1969), 89-96.

2 See Arnold Rockman, "How 20 Canadians Draw the Line," Canadian Art, 21, No. 90 (March, April, 1964), 85-95.

3 The Medium of acrylic was new to Yates at this time. He discovered that when using it, he could manipulate the surface by adding different materials knowing that they would stick to the canvas.

4 Jim Salt mentions the "personal mythology" in his reviews. The symbolism, questioning of those in power and the corruption of that power in society, the need of the artist to express his own emotions in his art, the development by the artist of a personal mythology and the hope that the human viewer and artist would be able to relate because of their shared humanness, are all characteristics of Yates' Throne Room Series. The priests, court jesters, and kings are all meant to be allegorical figures respresenting powerful contemporary people in Edmonton and at the University of Alberta. The Series resulted because the artist rejected certain values in his society.

5 Norman Yates, "Metal Flags and Cloth Medals," Edge, No. 9 (Summer, 1969), 78. Yates' interest in contrast is evident in his choice of title.

6 Yates encouraged the viewer to touch the work to discern if the soldiers were real or illusionary. This unconventional gesture that bothered the gallery security guards, is in keeping with the theme of the work.

7 Norman Yates, "Metal Flags and Cloth Medals," p. 78.

[8] See Dorothy Barnhouse, "Image Secondary in Yates Showing," Edmonton Journal, 13 February, 1967, p. 22. where the critic asserts that the image is secondary to the "masterfully organized space . . ."

[9] Personal interview with Norman Yates, 12 December 1980.

[10] Joan Lowndes, "Yates Paints his Queens with Power," The Province, 15 October, 1968, p. 32.

[11] Yates, "Metal Flags and Cloth Medals," p. 78. Yates uses the same image not only within a series, but also in several series where he explores his theme. The nude figure from the Nude Series appears in the Allegoria Series, while the "gnomes" from the Allergoria Series appear in the Throne Room Series. A characteristic of the abstract imagists is "a concentration on and a continual reworking of a specific theme." See H. H. Arnason, History of Modern Art (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1968, p. 509).

[12] Yates, "Metal Flags and Cloth Medals," p. 78.

[13] Virgil Hammock, "Taking a Tilt at Hero Worship," Edmonton Journal, 5 December, 1969, p. 67. These paintings were exhibited in the United States in 1969 where the critic related them to an anti-Viet Nam war statement. In Germany in 1970, Rolf Seeback, called Yates a social commentator and related the work to a statement regarding "a climate of rising neo-facism in Germany." See Sarah Lansdell, "New Shows: Quick Draws and a Message," The Courier-Journal and Times, Louisville, K.Y., 5 January, 1969, p. E16. and Rolf Seebach, "Norman Yates' Exhibition in the Galerie Für Zeitgenössische Kunst, Hamburg," from the artist's personal files.

[14] Yates, "Metal Flags and Cloth Medals," p. 78.

[15] The abstract expressionists like Mark Rothko, Clyfford Still, Barnett Newman, Ad Reinhardt, Robert Motherwell, and Adolph Gottlieb have in common "the sense of an abstract image or symbol presented through color, line, and shape . . . . The sense of the image, or of the painting as a mysterious presence, is capable of moving the emotions of the spectator, of developing complex associations from the simplest visual stimuli." See Arnason, p. 508. Barnett Newman came to the Emma Lake workshop in 1959 and influenced many painters toward color field painting. For example, Les Graff and Doug Haynes, both Edmonton painters, attempted to come to terms with that style. Although Norman Yates was invited to attend the Emma Lake workshops on a few occasions he never could attend because of conflicting time schedules.

[16] Yates, "Metal Flags and Cloth Medals," p. 78.

[17] Salt, "Some Notes on the Visual Art of Norman Yates," p. 47.

[18] Marshall McLuhan, "The Media is the Message," In Contents of Canadian Criticism, ed. Eli Mandel (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971). p. 153.

[19] Salt, "Some Notes on the Visual Art of Norman Yates," p. 47.

[20] McLuhan, Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964).

[21] Personal interview with Norman Yates, 12 December 1980.

Chapter V

[1] Questionnaire for Alberta Culture. Visual Arts Branch, 1972, from the artist's personal files. p. 4.

[2] Yates, "Working description of the Library Mural," p. 1, from the artist's personal files.

[3] Lyonel Feininger's work is considered to represent an expressive offshoot of cubism. His paintings usually exhibit an abstract, geometric organization of the picture space. See Arnason, pp. 256, 156. The dynamic light areas in the mural could be related to some experimentation with holography that Yates carried out as part of his spacial investigations. These experiments involved ideas of light and space because the image changes the space into which it is projected. Yates had an "aptitude" for electronics and enjoyed his experiments with electronic equipment.

[4] Yates, "Working description of the Library Mural," p. 1.

[5] See Bob Harvey, "Cornflakes and Coke put City on Art Map," The Edmonton Journal, 16 January, 1970, p. 53.

[6] Norman Yates, "Extensions," December, 1969, from the artist's personal files.

[7] Ibid.

[8] See McLuhan and Harley Parker, Through The Vanishing Point-Space in Poetry and Painting (New York: Harper and Row, 1968).

[9] See Yates, "Extensions," December, 1969, p. 1.

[10] See Norman Yates, "Environment '70 in Alberta," Arts Canada, 27, No. 146/147 (August, 1970), 60-61. Environmental concerns, environmental art, and the idea of the artist relating meaningfully to society, were concerns of the later 1960's and early 1970's.

[11] Donald W. Buchanan, "A Prairie Approach to a Canadian Vision," Canadian Art, 20, No. 1 (January, February, 1963), 25. Series and process are also characteristics of contemporary Minimal art which stresses a simplistic geometric structure complicated only by a grid-like basis and serial construction. See Robert Pincus-Witten, Postminimalism (London: London Press, 1977), p. 14.

[12] Myra Davies, "Modern Art Questions the Validity of Traditional Art and Society," The Gateway, 27 February, 1970, p. C-3.

[13] Norman Yates, "Designing Clymenestra," C.K.U.A. January, 1970. p. 2., from the artist's personal files.

[14] Ibid., p. 5.

[15] Ibid., p. 3.

[16] Ibid., p. 5.

[17] See Norman Yates, "Art Becomes an Elastic Mosaic," Gateway, 27 February, 1970, p. C5. for Yates' ideas on art education.

[18] For example, Yates was the University of Alberta representative on the Western Canada Art Council from 1965 to 1967. He served on the Executive Council of the University Art Association of Canada from 1970 to 1971.

[19] Yates was a co-editor of the White Pelican editions, 1, No. 3; 2, No. 3; 3, No. 3; 4, No. 2; 5, No. 1. These issues are quite visually oriented showing Yates' influence.

[20] See "Norman Yates: Self-Portrait with 3M," White Pelican, 2, No. 2 (1972), 3-7.

[21] Personal interview with Norman Yates, 12 December 1980.

[22] Ibid.

Chapter VI

[1] Personal interview with Norman Yates, 12 December 1980.

[2] Tom Radford, "A Disappearing West," For An Independent Hairy Hill, pref. Myra Davies (Ottawa: The National Gallery of Canada, 1973).

[3] George Melnyk, "For An Independent Hairy Hill: The Populist Art of the West," White Pelican, 5, No. 1 (1975), 14.

[4] George Melnyk, "From the People - From the Land - The Art of Norman Yates," Vie des Arts, 22 (Autumn, 1977), Eng. trans. 21.

[5] George Melnyk, "For An Independent Hairy Hill: The Populist Art of the West," p. 17. The author quotes from a televised statement made by Norman Yates in 1974.

[6] George Melnyk, "From the People - From the Land - The Art of Norman Yates," p. 90.

[7] Questionnaire for Alberta Culture. Visual Arts Branch, 1972. p. 7.

[8] See "Prairie Spaces and Places," Arts Canada, 29, No. 169/170/171 (Autumn, 1972).

[9] Personal interview with Norman Yates, 12 December 1980.

[10] At the same time other artists, who were interested in different areas, shared a need to discover their own environment away from the technological art of the 1960's, for example, the N.E. Thing Co. from Vancouver. Also in society as a whole, there was a concurrent move back to simplicity, characterized by the "Back to the Land Movement."

[11] Yates, remarks made at the exhibition opening of "May this land Survive," quoted in "Yates Opens Exhibit at Art Gallery," Edmonton Journal, 24 March, 1973, p. 69.

[12] See Margaret Atwood, Survival - A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature (Toronto: Anansi, 1972) p. 32.

[13] Victor Hoar, The On to Ottawa Trek, Problems in Canadian History, ed. J. T. Copp (Vancouver: The Copp Clark Publishing Co., 1970) p. 1.

[14] Personal interview with Norman Yates, 12 December 1980.

[15] Ibid.

[16] George Melnyk, "For An Independent Hairy Hill," p. 17.

[17] Personal interview with Norman Yates, 12 December 1980.

[18] See Hoar.

[19] George Melnyk, "For An Independent Hairy Hill," p. 17.

[20] Personal interview with Norman Yates, 12 December 1980.

[21] Jim Simpson, "Masterful Drawings by City Artist," Edmonton Journal, 30 March 1973, TAB9.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Yates' use of pencil drawing on paper harks back to his own personal history when he drew as a child during the depression in Regina. He had never seen an oil painting until he grew up and went to eastern Canada. Also many Canadian artists had to give up oil painting during the Depression because of a lack of materials. So, pencil drawing could be associated with his boyhood, the Depression, and Regina.

[25] Personal interview with Norman Yates, 12 December 1980.

[26] Atwood, p. 169. See, Carol Bolt, Playwrights in Profile. Buffalo Jump. Gabe. Red Emma. (Toronto: Playwrights Co-op., 1976), pp. 19-79.

[27] Ted Ferguson, "Painting the West, Where Earth and Art are One," The Review, 23, No. 6 (1979), 5.

[28] See George Melnyk, "For An Independend Hairy Hill," pp. 14-25.

Chapter VII

[1] Dick Harrison, Unnamed Country, (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1977), p. 1.

[2] Lorne E. Render, The Mountains and the Sky, (Glenbow-Alberta Institute: McClelland and Stewart West, 1974), pp. 196, 197.

[3] Jim Simpson, TAB 9.

[4] Norman Yates, "Landscape into Landspace," Norman Yates Drawings and Paintings, Intro. Raymond Ouellet (Edmonton Art Gallery, 1976), n.p.

[5] See Edmond Husserl, The Function of the Sciences and the Meaning of Man, trans. and intro. Paul Piccone and James E. Hansen (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972) pp. 61-86.

[6] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, The Primacy of Perception, ed. John Wild (Evanston: Northwestern University Studies in Plenomenology and Existential Philosophy, 1964), p.xv.

[7] Ibid., p. xvi.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Personal interview with Norman Yates, 4 February 1981.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Merleau-Ponty, p. xvi.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Yates, Questionnaire for Alberta Culture, p. 7.

[15] Robert, pp. 110, 111.

[16] Ibid., p. 109.

[17] Ibid., p. 180.

[18] Yates and Lemieux seem to have a rather common sensibility. They both have painted childhood memories using old photographs for visual reference, and have been influenced by film. They also share common ideas about art education involving the notion of aiding the students to explore and develop without too much "interference" by the teacher.

[19] Robert, p. 178.

[20] Yates, "Landscape into Landspace," n.p.

[21] The concept of a dynamic interplay of opposites was advocated by Hans Hofmann. He influenced many of the "postwar generation" of artists. "His theory is based upon the belief that abstract art has its origin in nature. It reflects his belief in the duality of the world of art and the world of appearances, similar to the theory of the Symbolists; it deals with color as an element in itself which is capable of expressing the most profound moods, similar to, if not derived directly from, ideas stated by Kandinsky and the Expressionists; but it is concerned also with form in the tradition of Cézanne and Cubism. Hofmann's theories remained essentially the same throughout nearly fifty years of teaching and painting and formed a substantial foundation for much of contemporary theory on abstract art." See Herschel B. Chipp, Theories of Modern Art. A Source Book by Artisits and Critics (Berkeley: University of California, 1968) pp. 511-512.

[22] Henri Bergson, The Creative Mind, trans. Mabelle L. Anderson (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), p. 124.

[23] See Raymond Ouellet's introduction to Norman Yates Drawings and Paintings, n.p.

[24] Yates, "Filmwest in the West," p. 88.

[25] Personal interview with Norman Yates, 4 February 1981.

Chapter VIII

[1] At Latitude 53 Gallery, Edmonton, September 30 - October 18, 1975.

[2] Personal interview with Norman Yates, 4 February 1981.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Merleau-Ponty, p. 162. Merleau-Ponty is the inspiration for the Epistemological Conceptualist, Mel Bochnar, who also explores the physical relationship between his body and his environment, but in a much different way from Yates.

[9] Illingworth Kerr, in an interview with Bente Roed-Cochran for "Alberta: Concerning The History of the Visual Arts," Visual Arts Newsletter, 3, No. 1 (Winter, 1981), 15.

[10] Merleau-Ponty, p. 163.

[11] Hyemeyohsts Storm, Seven Arrows (New York, 1973) p. 14. The relationship between perception and the Medicine Wheel Circle is also mentioned by Lawrence Ricou, in "Circumference of Absence: Land and Space in the Poetry of the Canadian Plains," Canadian Plains Studies. 6 Man and Nature on the Prairies, ed Richard Allen (Saskatoon: Canadian Plains Research Center University of Regina, 1976), p. 67.

[12] Personal interview with Norman Yates, 4 February 1981.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Merleau-Ponty, p. 162.

[15] Robert, p. 15.

[16] Personal interview with Norman Yates, 4 February 1981.

[17] Laurence Ricou, Vertical Man/Horizontal World (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1973), p. xi.

[18] See Marytka Kosinski, "Identity Found in Western Lanscape," Edmonton Journal, 4 December, 1976, p. 37.

[19] Personal interview with Norman Yates, 4 February 1981.

20 When viewing Landspace works, one is often struck by an almost mystical interpretation of the visible world not unlike that of Casper David Friedrich, the German Romantic painter. Robert Rosenblum's theory of a tradition spanning from Friedrich to Rothko is an important study of style in modern art. See, Robert Rosenblum, Modern Painting and the Romantic Tradition (New York: Harper and Row, 1975). In this study, Rosenblum compares the structure and theme of paintings by Friedrich and Rothko. Simple, symmetrical compositions with a horizontal or vertical axis, combined with nature as inspiration give the often large scale works by both painters clarity and power. Yates also works within this structure. The artist, however, states that his works are not consciously intended to be spiritual.

21 Personal interview with Norman Yates, 4 February 1981.

22 The figure is usually placed in the center of the canvas or piece of paper.

23 This perspective system of starting with the viewer and "spreading" laterally is common to the oriental way of indicating perspective on a two-dimensional surface as opposed to a western perspective system.

24 The lower portion of this painting has an appearance somewhat like an ocean. A comparison between the Prairie and the ocean has been noticed by other artists like Sylvain Voyer in the painting Prairie Schooner, Art Recycling Depot (1972) and by Henry Kreisel in "The Prairie: A State of Mind." In Contents of Canadian Criticism, ed. Eli Mandel (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971) p. 258.

25 Critics have commented upon the woven appearance of Yates' recent work. See Mary Grayson, "Yates in his Maturity Creates Magic," Edmonton Journal, 25 October, 1980, p. C9.

26 Personal interview with Norman Yates, 4 February 1981.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.

Chapter IX

1 Yates, "Landscape into Landspace," n.p.

2 George Melnyk, "Painter of Land and Light," In Norman Yates Drawings and Paintings, n.p.

3 Ibid., n.p.

4 Grayson, p. C9.

5 Personal interview with Norman Yates, 4 February 1981.

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Plate 1: Untitled, c. 1950, watercolor on paper, 45.5 x 61.0 cm, collection of the artist.

Plate 2: The Gate, c. 1950, lithograph, 33.6 x 25.7 cm, collection of the artist.

Plate 3: Girl Drying Her Hair, 1952, oil on canvas, 82.5 x 61.0, collection of Professor Maurice J. Boote, Ontario.

Plate 4: Merry-Go-Round, 1954, watercolor on paper, 42.2 x 56.9 cm, collection of the artist.

Plate 5: Winter Landscape, 1958, ink and gouache on paper, 44.8 x 62.6 cm, collection of the artist.

Plate 6: Two Figures in a Space, 1960, watercolor and pencil on paper, 44.7 x 57.0 cm, collection of the artist.

Plate 7: Figures and Landscape I, 1961, gouache on paper, 66.8 x 52.0 cm, collection of the artist.

Plate 8: Stage Design for The Lark, 1962, gouache on paper, 66.8 x 52.0 cm, collection of the artist.

Plate 9: Nude, 1962, oil on canvas, 98.0 x 88.2 cm, location unknown.

Plate 10: Landscape, 1963, gouache on paper, 66.8 x 52.0 cm, collection of the artist.

Plate 11: New Town, 1963, pencil and gouache on paper, 66.7 x 51.8 cm, collection of the artist.

Plate 12: Durham Landscape, 1963, watercolor on paper, 44.5 x 56.9 cm, collection of the artist.

Plate 13: Return to Olympia, 1964, acrylic on canvas, 153.0 x 122.0 cm, collection of the artist.

Plate 14: Allergoria 3, 1964, graphite on paper, 40.0 x 53.0 cm, location unknown.

Plate 15: Queen Head, 1965, graphite on paper, 61.0 x 45.5 cm, collection of the artist.

Plate 16: Wall Painting I, 1968, acrylic on canvas, 101.2 x 101.2 cm, location unknown.

Plate 17: Revolving Credit, 1968, acrylic and foil on canvas, 102.0 x 91.8 cm, collection of the artist.

Plate 18: Wall Painting II, 1969, acrylic and foil on canvas, 153.0 x 127.5 cm, collection of the University of Alberta.

Plate 19: Engineering Building Mural, 1966, concrete, 25.5 x 7.5 m, located on the south exterior of the Engineering Building, University of Alberta.

Plate 20: Centennial Library Mural, 1967, acrylic on plaster, 2.4 x 5.7 m, located in the Centennial Library, Edmonton.

Plate 21: Flag Design, City of Edmonton, 1967.

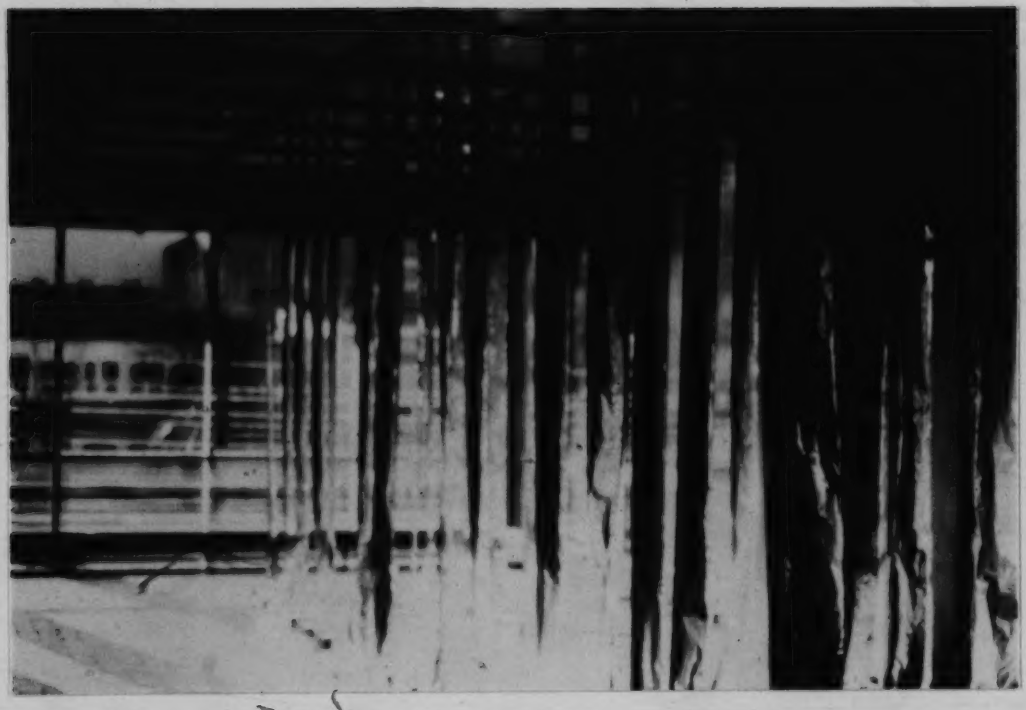

Plate 22: Kinetic Foil, 1969, foil and cardboard, approx. 3.6 x 1.35 x 7.5 m, installation piece, Students' Union Art Gallery, University of Alberta.

Plate 23: Stage design, Let's Murder Clymenestra According to the Principles of Marshall McLuhan, 1969, performed in the Students' Union Theatre, University of Alberta.

Plate 24: Stage design, Up against the Wall Oedipus, 1970, performed in the Students' Union Theatre, University of Alberta.

Plate 25: Four Space Elevator with Brand, 1972, graphite on paper, 304.8 x 104.5 cm, collection of the artist.

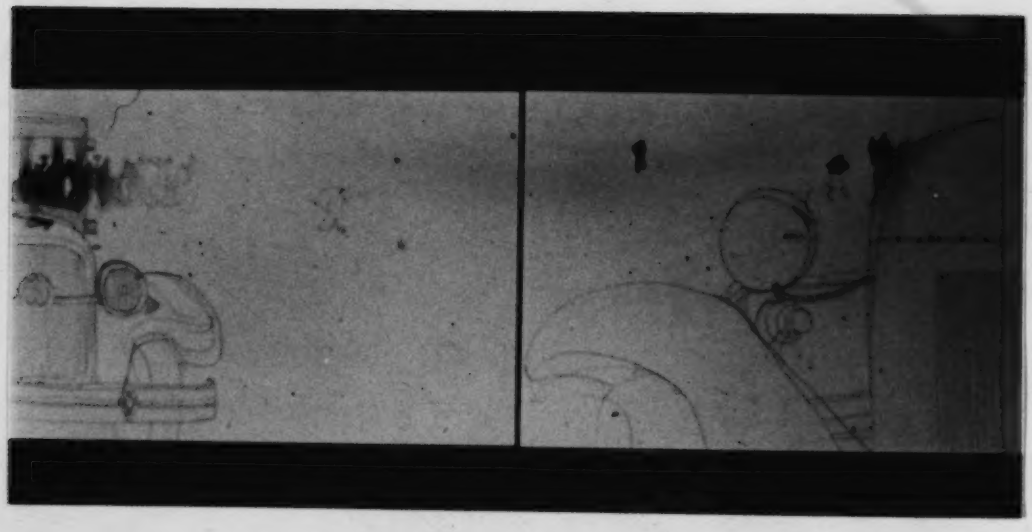

Plate 26: Two Space Regina Riot 1935, 1972, graphite on paper, 66.0 x 202.4 cm, location unknown.

Plate 27: Three Space Regina Riot 1935 I, 1972, graphite on paper, 198.9 x 102 cm, collection of the Alberta Art Foundation.

Plate 28: Portable Canadian Hero II, 1972, graphite on paper, 213.4 x 335.3 cm, collection of the artist.

Plate 29: Sketch IV, 1972, graphite and arcylic on canvas, 66.3 x 102 cm, collection of the artist.

Plate 30: Two Space Quarter Section No. 20, 1973, acrylic on canvas, 167.6 x 304.8 cm, collection of Dr. J. Orrell, Edmonton.

Plate 31: Three Space Quarter Section, 1973, acrylic on canvas, 122.4 x 188.7 cm, location unknown.

Plate 32: Two Space Quarter Section, 1974, arcylic on canvas, 102.0 x 233.3 cm, collection of the Alberta Art Foundation.

Plate 33: Two Space With Three Figures, 1975, pencil and acrylic on paper, 66.3 x 102.0 cm, collection of the artist.

Plate 34: Landspace Two, 1975, acrylic on canvas, 127.0 x 203.2 cm, collection of the Government House Foundation, Edmonton.

Plate 35: Landspace Six, 1975, acrylic on canvas, 91.8 x 193.8 cm, private collection.

Plate 36: Landspace Sixteen, 1975, acrylic on canvas, 115.0 x 275.0 cm, collection of Hooke Outdoor Advertising, Calgary.

Plate 37: Landspace Seventeen, 1976, arcylic on canvas, 125.0 x 275.0 cm, collection of the University of Alberta.

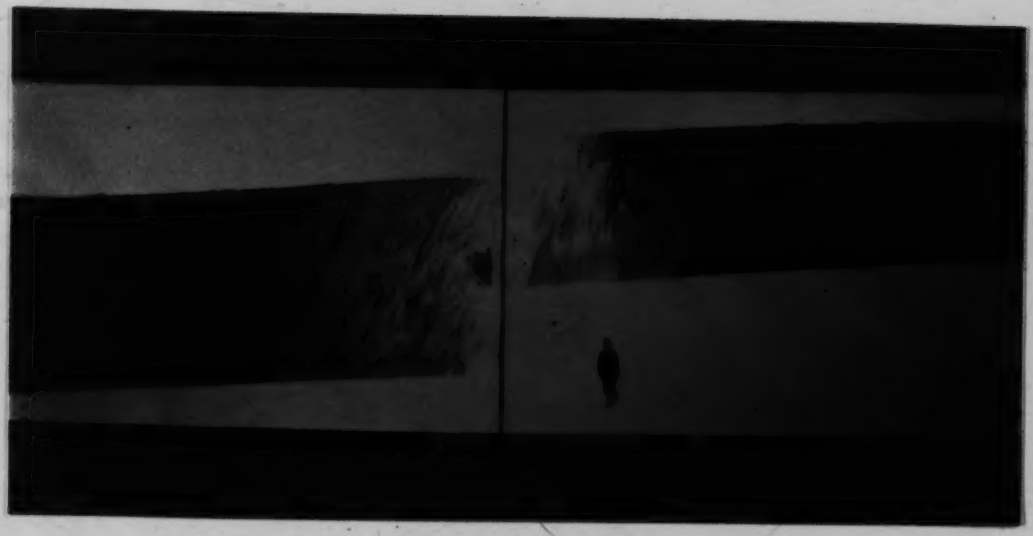

Plate 38: Two Space Land Drawing No. 3, 1976, graphite and acrylic on paper, 66.3 x 204.0 cm, location unknown.

Plate 39: Landspace Twenty, 1976, acrylic on canvas, 112.0 x 275.0 cm, collection of Mr. and Mrs. D. Schmidt, Edmonton.

Plate 40: Landspace Twenty-One, 1976, acrylic on canvas, 115.0 x 275.0 cm, collection of Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia.

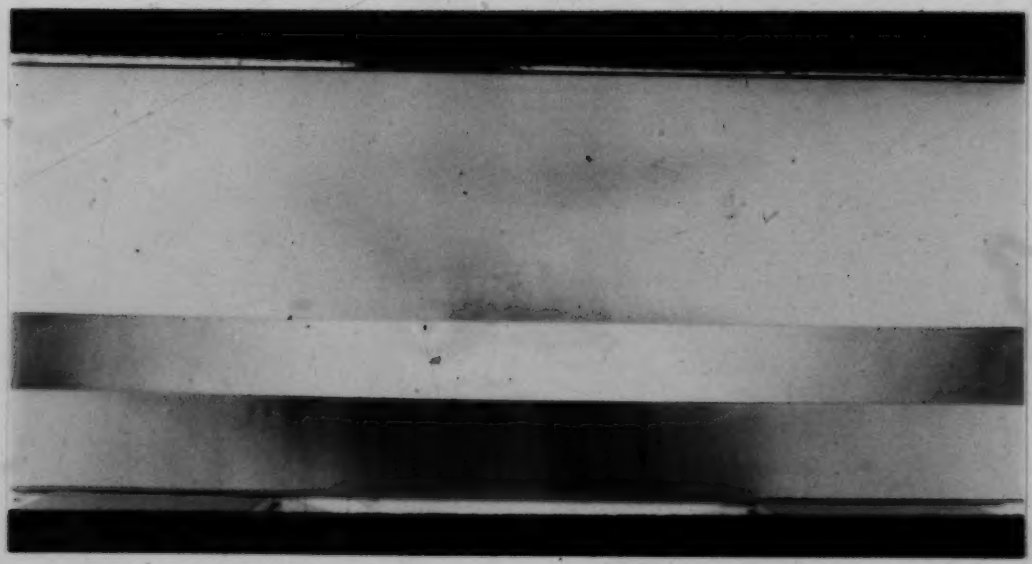

Plate 41: Landspace Twenty-Three, 1976, acrylic on canvas, 111.5 x 275.4 cm, location unknown.

Plate 42: Landspace Thirty-One, 1976, acrylic on canvas, 109.6 x 280.5 cm, location unknown.

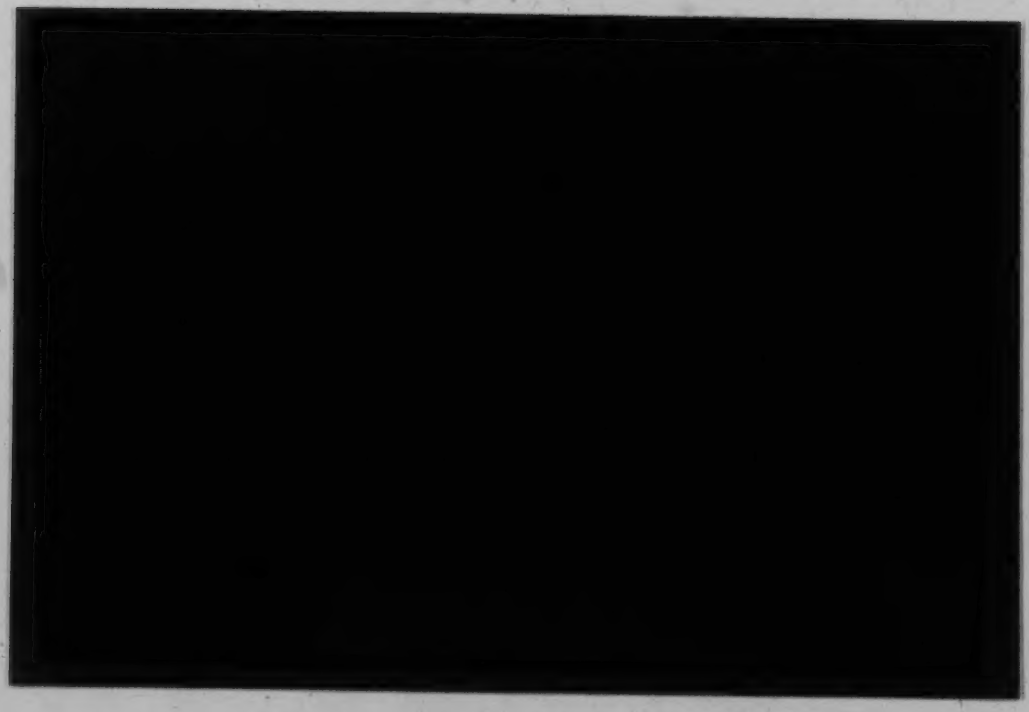

Plate 43: Landspace Thirty-Nine, 1979, acrylic on canvas, 81.5 x 122.0 cm, collection of Francine Gravel, British Columbia.

Plate 44: Land Drawing No. 13, 1980, colored charcoal, pastel, and graphite on paper, 56.0 x 76.0 cm, collection of Monica Miller, Edmonton.

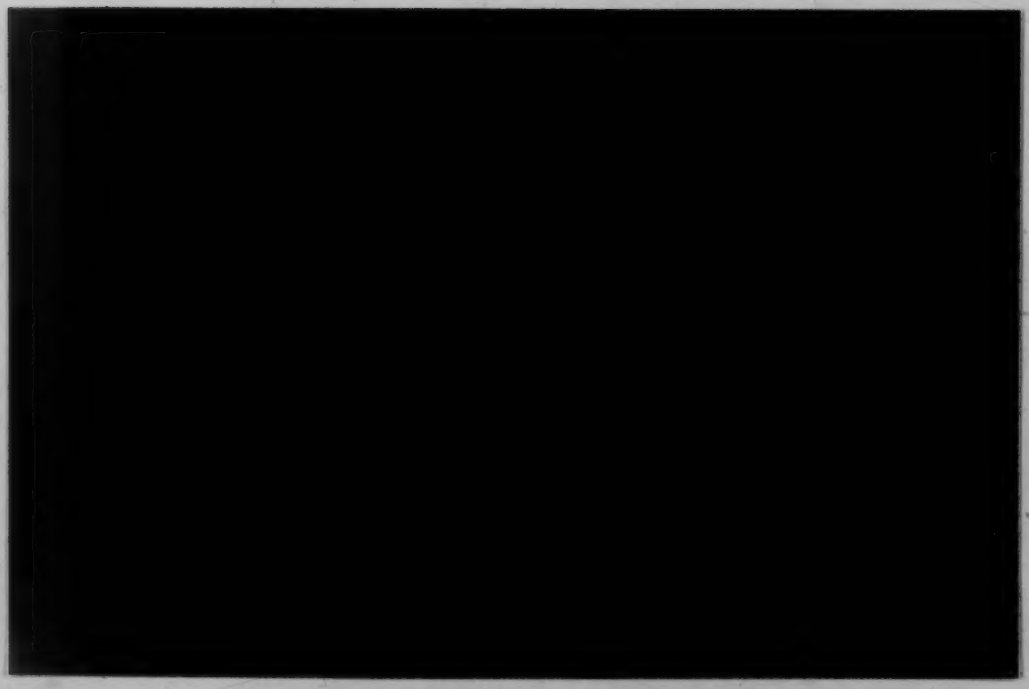

Plate 45: Land Drawing No. 27, 1980, colored charcoal, pastel, and graphite on paper, 56.0 x 76.0 cm, collection of Dr. G. Prideaux, Edmonton.

Plate 46: Landspace Fifty, 1980, acrylic on canvas, 229.0 x 550.0 cm, collection of the Oxford Development Group, Edmonton.